

## Observations on Women in the Genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1–9

Although these chapters contain numerous references to males, they also contain references to more than fifty different women, named or unnamed. These references construe women as fulfilling a variety of roles in society, and characterize and identify them in various ways. Although the text was (most likely) written by male literati for male literati and reflects a patriarchal point of view, it contains references that indicated to the early readers of the book that ideologically-construed gender expectations may and have been transgressed in the past and with good results. The goal of this article is to advance preliminary, basic observations about some of these references to women in the genealogical lists, within the historical context of the society for which the book of Chronicles was composed<sup>(1)</sup>. It is our hope that by doing so, this paper will lead to future, more detailed studies on these topics.

For the purpose of the present endeavor, it seems heuristically helpful to classify the roles assigned to women in 1 Chronicles 1–9 into two categories: (a) those in which they are involved in lineage roles often associated with female members of an ancient household and (b) those representing roles that were commonly assigned to mature males in the society in general, or in their household<sup>(2)</sup>. It should be stressed already that the borders between (a) and (b) are represented as porous in Chronicles. Although most of the women referred to under category (a) are reported to perform “traditional” roles, a significant number of them are described as successfully fulfilling roles usually associated with males within the main (male)

<sup>(1)</sup> In other words, this article concerns itself only with matters of ancient Israelite history.

<sup>(2)</sup> It should be stressed that we are not advancing here the relatively common, but now more and more, and correctly under attack clear-cut dichotomy between “domestic” and “public” roles. Yet, even if one assumes that one of the basic metaphors that underlies the social imagination of ancient Israel (and most societies) in the ancient Near East was that of a “patrimonial household”, there were clear, gender-related social expectations. On the patrimonial household as the basic metaphor, see J.D. SCHLOEN, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN 2001).

discourses of the time. As a result, the reading and rereading of these genealogies reminded the (male) literati, for whom they were written, again and again, that common social (including gender and, as we will see, ethnic) boundaries have, at times, been transgressed in the past, and that the results of these ‘transgressions’ have been positive<sup>(3)</sup>. These reminders set in proportion the claims for boundaries that are implicitly advanced by the same genealogies. The result is a more nuanced ideological viewpoint on these matters, one in which claims made at one point are shown to be neither categorically nor universally valid, and one that allows for flexible explanations of events in Israel’s construction of the past, and in the lives of the readers as well<sup>(4)</sup>. Although genealogies deal with ideological construction, it is reasonable to assume that the references to females fulfilling male roles reflect to some extent the actual state of the society in Yehud<sup>(5)</sup>, just as those referring to them in “traditional” roles do. Thus, the constructed world of the genealogies may shed light on Yehudite Israel.

### I. Family/Lineage Roles of Women

The most central of all traditional roles of women in biblical — and other ancient near eastern — literature and society was that of mother<sup>(6)</sup>. Needless to say, the male literati responsible for this literature were well aware that only women had the biological ability to give birth to children and therefore to maintain, through the continuous sequence of (female) childbirth, the continuation of a genealogical line and of society as a whole. It is worth stressing that

<sup>(3)</sup> See BEN ZVI, “The Book of Chronicles: Another Look”, *SR* (2003, forthcoming).

<sup>(4)</sup> This is consistent with the general tendency in Chronicles to qualify the validity of most of the lessons that the readership could have learned from individual accounts by setting them “in proportion” by lessons communicated elsewhere. See BEN ZVI, “The Book of Chronicles: Another Look”, and ID., “A Sense of Proportion: An Aspect of the Theology of the Chronicler”, *SJOT* 9 (1995) 37-51.

<sup>(5)</sup> Cf. T.C. ESKENAZI, “Out From the Shadows: Biblical Women in the Postexilic Era”, *JSOT* 54 (1992) 25-43.

<sup>(6)</sup> Of course, within the social purview of the period, this role was directly associated with that of wife of a husband. Although, for obvious reasons, this article touches on both the construction (or constructions) of the family in ancient Israel and the actual life of families at that time, it is not a study of families or “the family” in ancient Israel.

any genealogical list therefore, at least implicitly, acknowledges and communicates the centrality of childbirth and of the females in society, even if they remain unmentioned in the literary portrait, and if they are excluded from the explicit wording of the text. In fact, even these “erasures” of women speak volumes.

Of course, the procreation of new generations was understood within the realm of a (traditional, patriarchal) family. Thus women were not only mothers of children but also wives of husbands, or at least concubines (פִּילגֶשׁ) of the father by whom they had children<sup>(7)</sup>.

As expected in any ancient Near Eastern society, in 1 Chr 1–9 women are also referred to and identified as daughters of someone. In addition, there are explicit references to women in another type of basic kinship relation, namely in terms of sisters, either as a sister of the *pater familias* in the older generation or as a sister of a son within the younger generation of children of the household of the father. Although these references are not absolutely necessary to maintain the (patriarchal) lineage, the genealogies of Chronicles mention several women in these kinship relations.

### 1. Mother - Wife

As expected, women are often mentioned in the genealogies of Chronicles as mothers. For instance, in 1 Chr 2,21, the readers of the book find a reference to the daughter of Machir, the father of Gilead (notice the usual construction of identity as daughter of X). Her husband, Hezron, married her when he was sixty years old — her age is not mentioned, see below. She bore a son, Segub. In 2,24 the text mentions Abijah, wife of Hezron, who after the death of her husband bore him a son, Ashhur, who became the father of Tekoa<sup>(8)</sup>. Hodesh was the mother of seven sons (1 Chr 8,9). Maacah, the wife of the

(7) “Unattached” women are not described as mothers of children who continue the family lineage in the ideological world of the genealogies. To be sure, this does not mean that no unattached women ever became pregnant and bore children in ancient Israel, nor that their children never found their way into society. The role of genealogies, however, is not to faithfully describe the social reality, but to construe an ideal world.

(8) It is worth noting that the name Abijah (אֲבִיהָ) occurs as female name only in the book of Chronicles (1 Chr 2,24 and 2 Chr 29,1), elsewhere in the HB, and often in Chronicles itself, it appears as a male name (1 Sam 5,2; 1 Chr 3,10; 2 Chr 11,20; Neh 12,17). The Chronicler reinterprets the name of the mother of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18,2, namely אֲבִי, as a shortened form of אֲבִיהָ (cf. 2 Kgs 18,2 with 2 Chr 29,1). King אֲבִיהָ of Chronicles is, of course, King אֲבִים of Kings.

father of Gibeon, appears twice, in 1 Chr 8,29 and 9,35. The text seems to suggest that she gave birth to nine or ten sons, depending on the verse, whose names are transmitted subsequently and who, as expected, are textually inscribed as the sons of her husband. Several other examples of references to women who bore children appear elsewhere in the genealogies<sup>(9)</sup>.

In a significant number of cases nothing is said about the women/mothers. In fact, they remain unnamed, anonymous<sup>(10)</sup>, even when references to named mothers appear in textual proximity of their own, and even if they are supposed to be of “higher status” than the named mothers. This is the case in 1 Chr 2,42-46; the implied wife of Caleb, who had at least three sons — the exact number of children remains unclear — remains unnamed, but the same does not hold true for his *פִּילֶגֶשׁ*, who was the mother of two of his sons. The latter was certainly not viewed by the historical readership as enjoying a higher status than the former in the household, and the explicit association of children with her serves to separate the two branches of the family in a way that within the discourse of the period gives preference to those by the higher status mother. Yet it is worth noting that the text here does not want the readers to associate naming with status, quite the opposite. A similar case occurs in 1 Chr 2,25-26. The text in 2,25 informs the readers that an implicit, but unnamed first wife of Jerahmeel bore him five sons. The next verse informs them that Jerahmeel also had another wife, whose name was Atarah and who was the mother of Onam. The reference to the “other” woman (*אִשָּׁה אֲחֵרָה*) serves to create an ideological hierarchy between the two, to separate “his” son from the other sons. Significantly, the lower status woman is the one that is named in the text, and about whom something is said. Further, the wording of the text is worthy of notice; Atarah is referred to as “the mother of Onam”, but not explicitly as

<sup>(9)</sup> For instance, in 1 Chr 4,5-7 two wives of Ashhur, the father of Tekoa, are mentioned as mothers with their sons, Naarah gave birth to four sons while Helah had three; in 1 Chr 2,29 Abihail is mentioned — she has two children; in 1 Chr 7,16 Maacah is mentioned as the wife of Machir and as a mother.

<sup>(10)</sup> The larger issues associated with the characterization of individuals as nameless stands well beyond the scope of this contribution. It may be said, however, that the present study shows that namelessness does not mean total erasure. In fact, the tendency in the genealogies discussed here is to endow nameless characters with some identifying markers and, at times, with a bit of personal history, which is, in one way or another, intertwined somewhat with the social history of Israel and its lineages.



“the wife of Jerahmeel”<sup>(11)</sup>. Yet at least when it comes to royal wives, the presence of information characterizing the mothers, even if it is minimal, cannot be associated with lower status<sup>(12)</sup>.

It is worth mentioning that “wives/women” are mentioned next to ‘sons’ in a context of military troops and military heads of families in 1 Chr 7,4. The text communicates and reflects a viewpoint that directly associates wives/women, along with “sons”, with the military potential of the group. The implied association seems to be that the number of wives is proportional to the number of potential sons/soldiers in the army.

As in other texts in the HB, “wives/mothers” may also be described as giving names to their children (cf. Gen 4,25; 29,33; 30,11.13.20.21.24; 38,3. 4; but cf. also Gen 4,26; 5,3.29; 17,19; 21,3)<sup>(13)</sup>. For instance, 1 Chr 7,16 informs the readers of the book that Maachah named her son Peresh (forming a wordplay to his brother’s name Sheresh) and another unnamed mother is mentioned in 1 Chr 7,23 who gave birth to a son of Ephraim, after a period of distress that afflicted the household and within — the explicit world of the text — the male head of the household in particular and consequently, in this case, the father names the child in a way that recalls that distress. Yet, the readers of the book are also told that the distress of mothers may also influence, and has influenced the naming and future of their children. 1 Chr 4,9 informs them that the unnamed mother of Jabez named her son in reference to her own experiences. The theme of the mother’s painful effort reflected in his name is then literarily transformed into the glory of her son through the blessing of YHWH (1 Chr 4,10; see word play on *יעבץ*, *יעבץ*, *בעצב* and *עצבי*; vv 9-10). Symbolically, the mother and her experiences become embodied and transformed in the life of her son. It gives notice that the role assigned

<sup>(11)</sup> Effacing and particularly self-effacing were important and positive attributes within the purview of the (male) literati in the Achaemenid period within whom and for whom the book of Chronicles was written. On self-effacing see E. BEN ZVI, “What is New in Yehud? Some Considerations”, *Yahwism after the Exile. Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (eds. R. ALBERTZ – B. BECKING) (STAR 5; Assen 2003) 32-48.

<sup>(12)</sup> According to 1 Chr 3,1-3 David had six sons in Hebron from six different mothers. There is not much information about any of them, but the least is said about the last three, Haggith, Abital, and Eglah.

<sup>(13)</sup> For fathers giving names to children in the genealogies of Chronicles, see 1 Chr 7,23, mentioned above. It is worth stressing that explicit references to fathers naming their children in Chronicles are rare.

to Jabez's mother is far more important in the pericope than that of his father, who goes totally unmentioned — and is perhaps, partially and symbolically substituted by YHWH who provides him with land, i.e., a main component of a patrimonial inheritance — and of his brothers whose only role is to characterize him through contrast; namely they appear just that it may be stated that they are less honored than him. Jabez's sons are not mentioned<sup>(14)</sup>.

The explicit, textual presence of what in the present form of the text might be another unnamed mother is obvious in 1 Chr 4,17, because of the occurrence of the verb וַתַּהַר “and she became pregnant”. It is unclear, whether the mother mentioned in that verse is Bithiah (without textual emendation, see Radak; with textual emendation, see, for instance, Japhet), or Ezra if the latter can be understood as feminine, which is dubious (cf. Johnstone), or whether the mother is presented without any name<sup>(15)</sup>. The entire pericope (1 Chr 4,17-18) is, however, very clear on another matter. It associates and classifies two mothers as per their ethnic origin. One is a Judahite (or Jewish?) and the other is Egyptian. Significantly, the book of Chronicles informs its intended and primary readers that the children of both are included in the Israelite genealogies. One may add also the Egyptian is characterized on the one hand emphatically as an outsider (“Egyptian” and “daughter of Pharaoh”)<sup>(16)</sup>, but on the other she is clearly Israelitized by means of her name; she is בִּתְיָה, “Bithiah”, that is, a daughter/worshiper of YHWH, not of Pharaoh. It seems therefore, that a text in the genealogies suggests to the intended and primary readers that, at least in the case of women, the “ethnicity” of their origin (and accordingly, their genealogy) does not fully disappear with marriage to an Israelite, but that in the end, such ethnicity does not matter for inclusion or exclusion from Israel, because the main differentiating line is that of worshiper of YHWH and non-worshiper of YHWH (on this matter

<sup>(14)</sup> For a recent treatment of the Jabez pericope in Chronicles and for some relevant bibliography see R.C. HEARD, “Echoes of Genesis in 1 Chr 4,9-10: An Intertextual and Contextual Reading of Jabez's Prayer”, *JHS* 4/2 (2002); available at <http://purl.org/jhs> and <http://www.jhsonline.org>.

<sup>(15)</sup> See S. JAPHET, *1–2 Chronicles. A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville KY 1993) 114–115; W. JOHNSTONE, *1–2 Chronicles* (JSOTSS 253; Sheffield 1997) I, 62–63.

<sup>(16)</sup> It goes without saying that the chances that an actual daughter of Pharaoh married a “nobody” from Judah are nil. The text under discussion, however, does not deal with issues of critical history, but with matters associated with the construction of a social (and ideological) self in the Persian period.

see also below). Another interesting element in this pericope is that Miriam, most likely a daughter not a son, is mentioned first in a list of children<sup>(17)</sup>.

Another matter is suggested by 1 Chr 1,50. There, within a seemingly common reference in a list of male characters (X and the name of his wife was Y), there is a reference to Mehetabel, the wife of Hadad. The interesting point for the present study is that Mehetabel is described as the daughter of Matred, daughter of Me-zahab<sup>(18)</sup>. Thus the readership is informed of one important woman, a queen for that matter, who is identified as the daughter of her mother, rather than as the daughter of a male father. One may notice, that in fact, her father is not mentioned at all. It is worth mentioning that the Syriac seems to be aware of such an “anomaly” in a patriarchal society and attempts to erase it by turning the second “daughter of” into “son of”<sup>(19)</sup>. The change only underscores the atypical character of the information communicated by the Book of Chronicles at this point, of the construction of the identity of a person as son of his mother, and only his mother, rather than of his father. Moreover, even Matred may be identified as the daughter of her mother, since Me-zahab (Heb. מִי זָהָב) may be either a male or a female name. (It is possible that the context here favors a female name since there is no reference to the father of Matred’s daughter). The important lineage thus runs through the women who maintain it instead of the male figures.

Just as there is room in the genealogies of Chronicles for a woman who is explicitly identified as a daughter of her mother instead of the daughter of her father (on “daughter”, see below), there is room also for sons identified as sons of their mothers. The readers of Chronicles are told of Zeruiah and Abigail. As it is well known, the sons of Zeruiah were identified only by their mother, rather than of their father

<sup>(17)</sup> It is possible that the prominence of the name “Miriam” contributed to the choice of a person carrying that name for the first slot in the list.

<sup>(18)</sup> The same information is communicated by Gen 36,39. Some of the texts from 1 Chronicles 1–9 that will be discussed here have parallels elsewhere in the HB, and some do not. This article is not meant to reconstruct the compositional activities of the authorship, but the message that *the book* communicated to its early readership regarding the matters under discussion. This being so, the distinction between “parallel” and “non-parallel” texts in Chronicles is immaterial for the present endeavor.

<sup>(19)</sup> Although the Syriac and the Arabic translation change the second *bat* into *br* while reading the preceding name as a male name the Hebrew transmission of the text itself is clear on this point.

who remains anonymous<sup>(20)</sup>. More importantly, the intended readers of the book cannot fail to notice the wording of 1 Chr 2,16-17. Here both, Zeruiah and Abigail, that is, two mothers are allocated the expected role of males in a genealogic list. Moreover, out of the two fathers, one goes unmentioned and the other, Jether, is assigned to a slot comparable to that of a wife and bearer of children<sup>(21)</sup>. Given the explicit foreign association of Jether in Chronicles<sup>(22)</sup>, one might be tempted to surmise that the book here reflects a tendency to give preference to the inner Israelite connection, but a more 'global' perspective is easily recognizable in Chronicles. In fact, references to explicitly foreign ethnic backgrounds in the Judahite genealogical lists are quite prominent in the book, and likely stood as a critical response to ideological tendencies such as those expressed in Ezra and Nehemiah (see discussion above, and see also below)<sup>(23)</sup>. Since Chronicles emphasizes David to a great extent, and since in Chronicles Zeruiah and Abigail are characterized as sisters of David<sup>(24)</sup>, it is possible that their higher status here is related to the claim in Chronicles that they were sisters of David and daughters of Jesse<sup>(25)</sup>. Yet the readers are clearly told that in their case, the family lineage is to be construed according to the mother rather than the father<sup>(26)</sup>.

There is another, unequivocal case that reminded the intended and primary readers of the genealogies that the family lineage may, at times, be identified and maintained through the maternal side. In other

<sup>(20)</sup> See 1 Sam 26,6; 2 Sam 2,13.18; 3,39; 8,16; 16,9; 18,2; 19,22.23; 21,17; 23,18; 1 Kgs 1,7; 2,5.22; 1 Chr 11,6, 11,39; 18,12.15; 26,28; 27,24. In 2 Sam 17,25 it is Zeruiah who is identified as Joab's mother.

<sup>(21)</sup> Cf. 1 Chr 1,50; 2,29; 8,29; 9,35; cf. also Gen 36,39; Num 26,58-59.

<sup>(22)</sup> He is explicitly characterized as an Ishmaelite in 1 Chr 2,17; but as an Israelite in 2 Sam 17,25.

<sup>(23)</sup> Cf. G.N. KNOPPERS, "Intermarriage, Social Complexity and Ethnic Diversity in the Genealogy of Judah", *JBL* 120 (2001) 15-30. Also cf. T. WILLI, *Juda – Jehud – Israel*. Studien zum Selbstverständnis des Judentums in persischer Zeit (FAT 12; Tübingen 1995) 141-142.

<sup>(24)</sup> See 1 Chr 2,15-17. In 2 Sam 17,25 the two are characterized as daughters of Nahash. Efforts to harmonize both accounts while maintaining that Zeruiah and Abigail were daughters of Jesse and sisters of David are evident in b. Shab 55b; b. BB 17a.

<sup>(25)</sup> Likewise one might consider that reference to Matred in 1 Chr 1,50 is due to the high status of Me-zahab. Although this is possible, there is no evidence supporting this conjecture. The name appears only here and in the parallel text in Gen 36,39 and nothing is said about this character beyond his/her being a parent of Matred.

<sup>(26)</sup> Cf. the case of the Barzillai house in Ezra 2,61.

words, that mothers may on occasion take the structural role commonly associated with fathers. The readers of Chronicles are informed that an ancient Judahite father who had no sons married his unnamed daughter<sup>(27)</sup> to a man who was both an Egyptian and his slave. The result of such action was generations of Judahites (1 Chr 2,34-35). The house of the father could be maintained, because his daughter became structurally speaking a “son”<sup>(28)</sup>. Of course, these are not common cases, but the message of Chronicles here is clear, gender and ethnic boundaries may be crossed and have been successfully crossed in the past<sup>(29)</sup>, when the situation warranted it.

It is worth noting that, as shown above, some of the references to mothers in the genealogies include not only an explicit mention that they bore their husbands’ children, and mainly, his sons, but also some additional information about themselves. Such references would have been superfluous had the male literati imagined women only as walking womb-bearers for their husbands/mates, with absolutely no significance of their own.

Given that genealogies construct a self-image of the community and shape borders of inclusion and exclusion and a “historical” memory to back them up, it is worth stressing that in a number of cases,

(27) It is worth noting that the language of the text follows a basic formula, X ויתן את בתו ל- in which X stands for a male, and which is attested elsewhere, with a number of variants. See Gen 29,28; 41,45; Exod 2,21; Josh 15,17; Judg 1,13 and of course, 1 Chr 2,35. Significantly, the daughter’s name appears in all these instances, except 1 Chr 2,35. The daughter’s role here is not to link two families — as in the other cases — but to allow the continuation of the house of the father. A study of the defamiliarization of the formula in Gen 29,29, and its potential implications for constructions of gender as expressions of hierarchy (cf. D. SEEMAN, “Where is Sarah Your Wife?” Cultural Poetics of Gender and Nationhood in the Hebrew Bible”, *HTR* 91 [1998] 103-125), stands beyond the scope of this paper.

(28) Cf. with some similar cases in Nuzi, see K. GROSZ, “Some Aspects of the Position of Women in Nuzi”, *Women’s Earliest Records*. From Ancient Egypt and Western Asia (ed. B. LESKO) (Atlanta 1989) 167-180, esp. 173-177.

(29) Of course, “successfully” refers to the evaluation of the situation from the perspective of the implied author of the book of Chronicles/genealogies and of the intended readership. “Success” from this perspective was tantamount to maintaining the father’s lineage and household, and in a larger scheme, that of the entire house of Israel. Chronicles and its intended and primary readership saw continuity from generation to generation as an expression of divine blessing. This is a quite common approach in group-based societies. From the viewpoint of those who identify with these perspectives, the marriage reported in the book was successful and blessed.

the additional information about the mothers concerns their place of origin<sup>(30)</sup>. The readers of Chronicles are told unequivocally that some of the mothers mentioned, and particularly those in the Judahite genealogies, were foreigners<sup>(31)</sup>. It is noticeable that the women mentioned with their place of origin — whether Israelites or “foreigner” — are treated in the same way as other women in the genealogies. The text does not suggest to its readers a disapproval of marriages of Israelites/Judahites with foreign wives in principle, nor that there was something wrong with the marriage of a Judahite woman and an Egyptian slave<sup>(32)</sup>. To be sure, there is, in some cases, a clear Israelitization of the woman (see the case of Bithiah, above), but even this Israelitization does not erase her foreign origin. These references to “foreign” mothers, and particularly so in the genealogies, make sense in Persian times when the polity of Yehud interacted with neighbor polities in political, administrative, economic and marital realms; the latter, at least within the upper classes. Compare this with the situation that was so criticized in Ezra-Nehemiah<sup>(33)</sup>. These references are consistent with a positive attitude and open relation toward neighboring countries that is clearly at odds with that advanced in Ezra-Nehemiah, but consistent with prominent references to “foreign” (fore)mothers or wives of praiseworthy leaders of Israel in the past that consistently appear in the construction of the past that was agreed upon, shared by and textually inscribed in the writings of the literati of Yehud (e.g., Zipporah [Moses], Osnat [Joseph], Ruth [David], Naamah [Solomon, foremother of all the Judahite kings and of any future Davidic king]).

<sup>(30)</sup> See, for instance, the references to Bathshua, the Canaanitess (1 Chr 2,3), and Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the Carmelitess (1 Chr 3,1). Maacah is introduced as daughter of Talmai, the king of Geshur (1 Chr 3,2). Bithiah is not only Egyptian, but also the daughter of Pharaoh (see above), and notice also the contrastive reference to the Judean woman (1 Chr 4,18).

<sup>(31)</sup> See examples above.

<sup>(32)</sup> Since progeny follows, there is an implicit indication that YHWH blessed the union. See above.

<sup>(33)</sup> Cf. E. BEN ZVI, “The Urban Center of Jerusalem and the Development of the Literature of the Hebrew Bible”, *Aspects of Urbanism in Antiquity from Mesopotamia to Crete* (eds. W.G. AUFRECHT – N.A. MIRAU – S.W. GAULEY) (JSOTSS 244; Sheffield 1997) 194–209, ID., “Introduction: Writings, Speeches, and the Prophetic Books – Setting an Agenda”, *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (eds. E. BEN ZVI – M.H. FLOYD) (SBLSymS 10; Atlanta 2000) 1–29, esp. 13–16; ID., “What is New in Yehud? Some Considerations”, *Yahwism after the Exile*, 32–48; A. LABAHN, “Antitheocratic Tendencies in Chronicles”, *Yahwism after the Exile*, 115–135.

## 2. Mother - Concubine

Concubines are mentioned as mothers in Chronicles<sup>(34)</sup>, and although their numbers in the book is not large, a total of four individuals, besides the generic reference to David's concubines<sup>(35)</sup>, three of them are mentioned by name, even if and perhaps particularly when the name of the main wife is omitted. As for the fourth, although her name is not given, it is explicitly stated that she was an Aramean (1Chr 7,14; on "foreign mothers", see above)<sup>(36)</sup>.

Turning to the other three, Ephah, Caleb's concubine, and their sons are mentioned in 1 Chr 2,46<sup>(37)</sup>, and those of Maachah, another concubine of Caleb, in 1 Chr 2,48-49. They and their children are presented as an integral part of the family structure, even if they and their sons are listed subsequently to the descendents of Caleb and an unnamed implied wife (2 Chr 2,43-45).

The most remarkable instance of the construction of the role of a concubine in these genealogies concerns Keturah<sup>(38)</sup>. First, the precise choice of wording closely links 1 Chr 1,32 to 1 Chr 1,28. The connoted message conveyed to the readers is clear: Keturah, "Abraham's concubine", takes, as it were, the structural role of Abraham, and her sons (i.e., the sons of Abraham and her) are to be identified with her (see 1 Chr 1,32-33). To be sure she and 'her' descendents are still listed

<sup>(34)</sup> It is debatable as to whether the Hebrew term פִּילגֶשֶׁת is to be interpreted as indicating an insecure, legal status for the concubine and, thereafter, for her children. The social structure of the higher social strata of ancient Israel was based on polygamy, rather than monogamy. A פִּילגֶשֶׁת was not regarded as an illegal whore of the *pater familias*, but rather obtained a role akin to, though lower than that of an additional "wife". The concubine herself as well as her children belonged to the household of the entire family and stood under protection of the *pater familias*. The woman, and consequently her children, obtained a legal status in Israelite society granting a place within family structures. However, the children of the concubine were not given the rights of full heritage. K. Engelken suggests that concubines lived in a somewhat insecure legal sphere, since their status is not granted by any HB law. See K. ENGELKEN, *Frauen im alten Israel. Eine begriffsgeschichtliche und sozialrechtliche Studie zur Stellung der Frau im Alten Testament* (BWANT 130; Stuttgart 1990) 74-126.

<sup>(35)</sup> See 1 Chr 3,9.

<sup>(36)</sup> For comparisons of the ratio of named to unnamed concubines, see the statistics in ENGELKEN, *Frauen*, 119-122.

<sup>(37)</sup> 1 Chr 2,47 may indicate the family origin of Ephah, but see also JAPHET, *1-2 Chronicles*, 86-87.

<sup>(38)</sup> It is worth noting that Chronicles departs from the tradition in Gen 25,1 in relation to the status of Keturah. According to Genesis, she is Abraham's wife, according to Chronicles, his concubine.

subsequently to those of Abraham, but contrary to the case of Isaac and Ishmael who are presented as Abraham's, theirs are constructed as hers. Significantly, neither Sarah nor Hagar, for that matter, is mentioned in Chronicles. To be sure, one may think of a variety of reasons for the tendency to separate between Abraham and children other than Isaac and Ishmael, but the fact remains that the readers for whom the book of Chronicles was written cannot but construe an image of a concubine who establishes an important lineage that is clearly identified by her name, rather than by that of a famous ancient male hero<sup>(39)</sup>.

### 3. *Mother - Divorcee*

One does not expect many references to divorcees in 1 Chronicles 1–9, but if they are mentioned, how are they constructed? In addition, what would their slot be in the genealogies if they bore children to the former husband? The early readers are informed of two divorcees of the same man, Shaharaim, in 1 Chr 8,8-11. One of the two bore sons; by implication, the readers are supposed to understand that the other did not<sup>(40)</sup>. The man, the readers are told, married a third, “new wife” who was named, significantly, Hodesh, Heb. חֹדֶשׁ. The text mentions the seven sons of this third wife first and following the report about their names adds, “these were *his* sons, heads of ancestral houses” (v 9; emphasis ours) that suggests that the household of the man was directly continued through his sons by Hodesh. Yet, in the next verse, the text mentions the names of the two sons whom he begot by his divorcee, Husham, (most likely) before he divorced her. As this lineage is set after that of the “new” wife of the man, the divorcee seems to hold the structural slot of the concubine.

It is worth stressing that although the list associated with Husham is not as impressive in numbers as that associated with Hodesh, the text explicitly states that it is the lineage by Husham that leads to a

<sup>(39)</sup> It is possible to understand the text in 1 Chr 2,18 as implicitly suggesting a construction of Jerioth as a concubine/mother. The text and its immediate textual context are difficult and in any case, unlike the other instances, Jerioth is not (explicitly) called a concubine.

<sup>(40)</sup> Although one may expect that in (male) lineages women who bore no children will be omitted, there are several examples of women who are mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1–9 and who are not associated with any children (e.g., 1 Chr 3,9; see also below). The genealogies of Chronicles often attempt to advance a representation of (patriarchal) households. Women may participate in a household without bearing children.



man who is reported to have built Ono and Lod and their towns, a deed that is understood within this context as an expression of divine blessing on the one who performed it. In other words, although the status of the divorcee was constructed as lower than that of the new, “current” wife, her children may still serve as potential leaders in Israel. One should mention also that this account carries an additional level of meaning. Divorce here is associated with geographical (and ideological) borders. Shaharaim bore sons by Hodesh in (the Field of) Moab, after he divorced his two earlier wives. At least one of the two is explicitly associated with lands in which Benjamin settled, through her descendents, and by association, both are <sup>(41)</sup>.

#### 4. Daughter in Law - Mother

There is one case of this situation, that of Tamar in 1 Chr 2,4 <sup>(42)</sup>. The story alluded to here is that of Genesis 38 <sup>(43)</sup>. If the reference to Tamar evoked in the readership the memory of that story, as is likely, then the pro-active and decisive role of Tamar in maintaining the (patrilineal) Judahite lineage and eventually the Davidic one was also brought to their attention. This is one particular version of a common motif that may be encapsulated in “when the men fail to fulfill their duties then their wives take action and save the day” (cf. Judith). This version, however, addresses matters of sexual and reproductive

<sup>(41)</sup> See Neh 11,31-35. It is noteworthy that children of a divorced mother could be sent with her (see 1 Esd 9,36, which probably represents an understanding of Ezra 10,44; on the latter, see H.G.M. WILLIAMSON, *Ezra-Nehemiah* [WBC 16; Waco, TX 1985] 144-45, 159; cf. J. BLENKINSOPP, *Ezra-Nehemiah* [OTL; Philadelphia 1988] 197, 200-201). Cf. Codex Hammurabi 137. One may note also that the metaphor underlying Hosea 1-3 shows that children may share the fate of their mother in a case of marital breakdown. On this matter, see also J.J. COLLINS, “Marriage, Divorce, and Family in Second Temple Judaism”, *Families in Ancient Israel* (eds. L.G. PERDUE – J. BLENKINSOPP – J.J. COLLINS – C. MEYERS) (Louisville, KY 1997) 104-163 (116) and note also the cautionary tone of J. BLENKINSOPP, “The Family in First Temple Israel”, *Families in Ancient Israel*, 48-103 (65-66).

<sup>(42)</sup> It is true that the identity of the person alluded to by the third person masc. suffix in כללו is theoretically unclear if the verse is read only from the perspective of v 3. The text of verse 4, however, clarifies that point. The father in law is Judah.

<sup>(43)</sup> There are numerous studies on the story of Tamar in Genesis 38. See, for instance, J.W.H. VAN WIJK-BOS, “Out of the shadows; Genesis 38; Judges 4:17-22; Ruth 3”, *Semeia* 42 (1988) 37-67; E. VAN WOLDE, “Texts in dialogue with texts; intertextuality in the Ruth and Tamar narratives”, *Biblical Interpretation* 5 (1997) 1-28.

control. It is not surprising that even if Tamar's actions led to the continuation of the patriarchal lineage, later literature attempted to "tame" the character of Tamar<sup>(44)</sup>.

### 5. *Identity as Daughter or Sister*

Women may belong to, or be associated with, households as "daughters" or as "sisters". The early readers of 1 Chronicles 1–9 were told and were asked to imagine women whose identity is explicitly associated with that of their fathers (e.g., 1 Chr 3,2.5; 4,18)<sup>(45)</sup>. It is worth stressing that these women may also fulfill the roles of wife and mother, but their identities remained tied also to that of their fathers. However, they are unable to pass that portion of their identity to their sons, who belong to a different household than the one from which they came. Yet in some cases, the identity of their sons is construed by the text, at least in part, around theirs too, in addition to that of their husbands<sup>(46)</sup>. In this regard, because of the obvious prominence of the people involved, the precise wording in 1 Chr 3,5 is noteworthy, *וַאֲלֵה נִוְלְדוּ-לוֹ בִּירוּשָׁלַם שְׁמֵעָא וְשׁוּבָב וְנָחֵן וְשִׁלְמָה אַרְבַּעָה לְבַת־שָׁעָה* for it seems to connote a parallel structure linking David and Bathshua (note the shared preposition ל in *לוֹ* and *לְבַת־שָׁעָה*; and the at least connoted double *נולדו*).

The genealogies in Chronicles 1–9 included also instances in which daughters and sons were born<sup>(47)</sup>. If these daughters/sisters were not associated with progeny in the account, then the text might have suggested to the readers that these women perhaps never married and remained a part of the patriarchal house (e.g., 1 Chr 1,39; 3,9) and that their situation reflected social norms at the time, though the number of unmarried women was probably very low in ancient Yehud. Yet

<sup>(44)</sup> See D.C. POLASKI, "On taming Tamar: Amram's rhetoric and women's roles in Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 9", *JSP* 13 (1995) 79-99.

<sup>(45)</sup> 1 Chr 3,2 mentions Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; in 1 Chr 3,5 Bathshua is introduced as the daughter of Ammiel, who is only known in Chronicles.

<sup>(46)</sup> See 1 Chr 4,18. There are numerous cases in which the construction of a male lineage is associated not only with that of the "original" father but also with the "original" mother, see 1 Chr 4,19. When the father has children from several wives, then his sons are characterized and identified according to their mothers too (e.g., 1 Chr 3,2).

<sup>(47)</sup> See, for instance, 1 Chr 3,9 and the six daughters in 1 Chr 4,27 alongside sixteen brothers. In these instances, sons are mentioned first, daughters, second. For a likely exception to this order, see 4,17 and see above.

caution is certainly warranted. In some cases, the issue might be the prominence of the lineage of the woman or of the woman herself (e.g., 1 Chr 3,19). Moreover, women similarly mentioned were explicitly associated with progeny. For instance, and to illustrate the case, the intended and primary readers of the book most likely thought that Achsah (1 Chr 2,49) did marry, and moved from the household of her father to that of her husband, to which she made a substantial contribution (see Josh 15,16-19; Judg 1,12-15).

When the readers were asked to imagine cases in which daughters but no sons were born, a number of related issues arose. A case has already been studied above (1 Chr 2,34-35) and there the daughter takes as it were the structural role of the son, and her husband, that of a wife. The reference to the daughters of Zelophehad in 1 Chr 7,15 evoked the memory of a similar case, though the solution reached there is somewhat, although not altogether, different (cf. Num 26,33; 27,1-7; 36,1-12; Josh 17,3-6)<sup>(48)</sup>.

As mentioned above, the genealogies include some references to daughters mentioned by name alongside their brothers<sup>(49)</sup>. For instance, in 1 Chr 2,49 the readers were told of Achsa (see also 1 Chr 2,16-17; 3,9.19; 4,3.27; 7,30.32). At times descendants are attributed to the mentioned daughter (1 Chr 2,16-17; 4,27), but in other instances children are not mentioned. Although some of these women were prominent or their names were, this does not hold true of all of them<sup>(50)</sup>. Their presence in the text is related to their being part of a household (see above). To be sure, they are mentioned after the brothers or sons, but still it is worth noting that they were mentioned even if a (male) genealogy could have easily omitted them.

One reference to a sister raises a different set of issues. 1 Chr 7,17-18 mentions Hammolecheth, whose name, incidentally, conveys the meaning of “she who reigns”<sup>(51)</sup> and who is probably presented as the sister of Machir (1 Chr 7,17), though the text may be understood as construing her as the sister of Gilead (1 Chr 7,14)<sup>(52)</sup>. The intended

<sup>(48)</sup> Cf. also 1 Chr 23,22.

<sup>(49)</sup> There are also instances in which the identity of the woman is associated with her being a sister of a male, rather than with her being the daughter of another. See 1 Chr 4,19.

<sup>(50)</sup> See, for instance 1 Chr 3,9 (Tamar); 3,19 (Shelomith); 4,3 (Hazzelelponi); 7,30 (Serah); 7,32 (Shua).

<sup>(51)</sup> “The (female) governor”?

<sup>(52)</sup> See Radak, Ralbag, and among contemporary scholars, JAPHET, *1-2 Chronicles*, 175.

readership of Chronicles is told that she is not only a sister to an important character in the Manassite list, but also the mother of three sons. There is no reference to the father of these sons, and they and now her lineage are brought together with that of her brother. In this case, the text asks the readers to imagine a metaphorical<sup>(53)</sup>, transgenerational household in which the sons of a sister of the head of the family are included, rather than being associated with those of the husband of the sister. In other words, the sons of the unnamed father followed for one generation a matrilineal instead of the usual patrilineal line. May we infer that in this case, “being sister of X” carried more weight than “being a wife of X”<sup>(54)</sup>?

A somewhat similar case is that of Zeruiah, David’s sister (see above), whose sons are associated with the lineage of Jesse (and the household of David). For all purposes she fulfills the role of a (male) head of her section of the family, to the point that her (anticipated) husband is not demoted to a subordinate position (cf. 1 Chr 2,34-35) but eliminated.

All in all, it is significant that there are instances in which sisters/daughters are mentioned alongside brothers/sons. As sisters are mentioned alongside their brothers or fathers, the text seems to accentuate their position within their particular families. Chronicles here seems to overstep the borders of a set of ideologically construed values according to which sisters were not supposed to possess a specific, broad influence within a family, nor were conceived as fulfilling an ideologically outstanding, permanent role within the social

<sup>(53)</sup> Speaking of metaphorical and metaphors we use the term here in a rather broad sense and do not intend to take the term as hinting at literary phenomena indicating multiple senses evoked by reception.

<sup>(54)</sup> It has been noted that compared to similar reports, the one on the genealogy of Manasseh in Chronicles contains proportionally more explicit references to, and involvement of women — even if the vast majority of the characters in the report are male. Scholars have reached different conclusions concerning the significance of this fact. For instance, W. JOHNSTONE writes: “A striking feature of the presentation of Manasseh is the prominent role played by women throughout. Given the patriarchal nature of the overall presentation of the tribes — the stress on the heroic heads of the household and their leadership of their numerous clansmen in war..., which is conspicuously lacking in this section... — this emphasis can hardly be interpreted other than as further indication of weakness and vulnerability in this area” (*1–2 Chronicles*, I, 106). In other ways, he suggests that gender characterizations and differentiations serve to communicate a hierarchy of (male) heroic power, and military strength (cf. Judith).

structure of a family, as opposed to, for instance, wife/mother of sons. The construction of these sisters is still somewhat ambiguous, because on the one hand they are still bound to a social structure that was considered as valid and authoritative, but on the other hand, the text seems to suggest to their intended (male) readership that they, at times, stepped beyond the boundaries of their expected roles, and blessing followed. As is typical of Chronicles, theological or ideological claims advanced in some, or even many accounts are informed and balanced by contrasting claims advanced elsewhere in the book<sup>(55)</sup>.

## II. Women in Roles Commonly Assigned to Mature Males in the Society

1 Chronicles 1–9 presents some women in roles that were commonly assigned to mature males in the society. When Chronicles tells its (intended and primary) readers of women who fulfilled the role of maintaining the (male) lineage, it asks them to imagine them as taking the role regularly assigned to the (male) head of a family. When Chronicles tells these readers of women who built cities, again it asks them to image these women as taking upon themselves roles unequivocally associated with males. Significantly, none of these cases of “transgression” are condemned; quite the opposite, they are associated with blessing. On the one hand, Chronicles certainly reflects and reinforces traditional gender roles in society, but on the other at times it subverts their claim to categorical, non-contingent validity. As mentioned above, it is possible that these “subversions” reflected the actual situation of at least some women in Persian period Yehud<sup>(56)</sup>.

### 1. *Women as Heads of the Family*

To begin with, the role of “head” of the family most likely implied activity in the so-called “public” sphere represented by men acting publicly in society. In 1 Chr 2,16-17 Zeruiah and Abigail are presented as mothers maintaining lineage and fulfilling functions of heads of a family. In sociological terms, the role of maintaining lineage implies

<sup>(55)</sup> See BEN ZVI, “The Book of Chronicles: Another Look”; ID., “Sense of Proportion”.

<sup>(56)</sup> See ESKENAZI, “Out From the Shadows”. For a socio-economic study of the status of some women in Jerusalem during the Persian period, see C.R. YODER, *Wisdom as a Woman of Substance. A Socioeconomic Reading of Proverbs 1–9 and 31:10-31* (BZAW 304; Berlin – New York 2001).

several duties. One important implication is that the woman/matriarch has to lead the family, represent it in public, manage its properties and the goods it produces, participate in trades as required and the like. In addition, heads of family participated in local, “political” life of their community. Ordinarily, it was men who fulfilled all these roles. When Chronicles asks its readers to imagine women as heads of a family, does it imply that these women stepped fully into this particular male world? It might be debated if the readers were asked to imagine these women as representing the family in official tasks, like those associated with ‘the elders,’ ‘the heads of the ancestral families,’ or ‘all Israel’<sup>(57)</sup>. It might also be debatable whether women served in these positions, even if only occasionally, in Yehud or not. But it is most likely that these readers were asked to imagine and did imagine these women as taking care of the economic life of the household, with all its implications concerning the management of property, ability to trade goods and the like, as well as holding the decisive authority within the household on internal matters.

Are there clues in the genealogies that suggest that the readers of Chronicles were asked also to imagine a world in which women could have, even if rarely, fulfilled clearly communal leadership roles and be assigned the prestige associated with these (male) roles?

## 2. *Women Building Cities*

Within the world of the HB, men build cities (e.g., Gen 4,17; Josh 19,50; Judg 1,26). Nowhere in the HB, except for 1 Chr 7,24 any woman is referred to as a city builder. Against this background, the atypical character of the explicit report about a woman who built cities in 1 Chr 7,24 is self-evident. In addition, it certainly is noteworthy that the theme of building cities is in itself very uncommon in 1 Chronicles 1–9.

In fact, there is only this reference to a woman who built three cities (one incidentally, carrying her own name; 1 Chr 7,24), and another about a man who built two cities in 1 Chr 8,12. Incidentally,

<sup>(57)</sup> Yet, leaving aside general matters concerning the classification of particular roles as typical, male, and public in these contexts, the fact remains that there are not many explicit references to “comparable” males fulfilling these roles in the genealogies — references to kings and rulers should not be taken into account for these purposes. Since there are many times more males than females in the genealogies, the statistical probability of finding a reference to a female character fulfilling these roles is quite minimal. See also section 2.2.

this man is a grandson of the divorced woman mentioned in 1 Chr 8,8.11 (see above). Further, the case of Sheerah is presented as even more remarkable, because she is not the only child of the head of the household. Her father has a son, and perhaps more than one (see below) but she is the builder.

Clearly, Sheerah's actions are evaluated in a very positive way. Building activities within Israel reflect divine blessing within the ideology of the book of Chronicles<sup>(58)</sup> and accordingly, the readers of the book are asked to understand Sheerah's actions as both a blessing and a reflection of a divine blessing. Further the text plays on the contrast between the association of blessing with Sheerah (i.e., the daughter) and of disaster with her brother, ברִיעָה ("Beriah;" see 1 Chr 7,23), who is "the son" of the father. The readers were also told that Sheerah's name, and her prestige remained in the community, as one of her cities carried it (Uzzen-sheerah).

Is Sheerah described as having a progeny of her own? Or is her "name" maintained only by the city that carries her name and the memory (זִכָּר) of her actions (cf. Sir 40,19)<sup>(59)</sup>? The latter seems to be the case. The male genealogical list in 1 Chr 7,25-27 that leads directly to none but Joshua the son of Nun begins with רֶפָח ("Rephah") who is either the son of Beriah (Sheerah's brother) or of Ephraim (Sheerah's father). If the latter is the case, then the slot associated with Sheerah in the list of children of Ephraim is highly irregular and would call attention to itself and to her role as city builder. Yet it all hinges on the question of the identity of the referent of the 3<sup>rd</sup> masc. suffix in וְרֶפָח בְּנוֹ (v 25) and it is probably more likely that it goes back to Beriah<sup>(60)</sup>.

To be sure, there is no reason to assume that the report about Sheerah is a faithful memory of actual events in which she was involved<sup>(61)</sup>. At the same time, it is worth considering whether the fact that a text maintaining that a woman may occasionally, but successfully fulfill even such a role was composed within and for the literati of the Persian period addresses ideological concerns that have no bearing whatsoever upon the actual conditions of the society in

<sup>(58)</sup> Cf., among many others, J. WEINBERG, *Der Chronist in seiner Mitwelt* (BZAW 239; Berlin – New York 1996) 226.

<sup>(59)</sup> That is, "children and the building of a city establish one's name". The importance of leaving a name is emphasized in Sirach (see, for instance, Sir 44,8).

<sup>(60)</sup> One cannot completely dismiss the possibility that masc. suffix here points to feminine referent, in this case Sheerah. See 1 Chr 23,22.

<sup>(61)</sup> Even the association of the name of one of the cities with her name raises questions in this regard.

which the literati lived. In addition to the considerations advanced above, one may note that at that time one finds some seals bearing the names of women. Although rare, if such seals were actually used by the mentioned women — and there is no substantial reason to assume that they were not — then they show that some elite women owned property, were involved in trade and financial affairs, and controlled goods owned by or produced by their household<sup>(62)</sup>. In addition, if the situation in Elephantine is of any relevance to that of Yehud, then one is to assume that some, or at least a few women may have fulfilled these roles there<sup>(63)</sup>.

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A full study of the characterization of women in Chronicles should take into account the entire book. Moreover, the early readers did not approach the genealogies in 1 Chronicles 1–9 in a manner that was uninformed by the rest of the book. On the contrary they read it as an integral part of the Book of Chronicles. Yet the preceding discussion clearly leads to some conclusions.

The genealogies shape and reflect an ideal and simplified construction of the past. It is a construction based on continuity grounded on lineages that were made possible through a sequence of

<sup>(62)</sup> J.J. Stamm, favors a social influence of women for Elephantine and the Persian period. See J.J. STAMM “Hebräische Frauennamen”, *Hebräische Wortforschung*. Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von Walter Baumgarten (eds. B. HARTMANN – E. JENNI – E.Y. KUTSCH – V. MAAG – I.L. SEELIGMANN – R. SMEND) (VTS 16; Leiden 1967) 301-339, 308-310. See also A. KIESOW, *Löwinnen von Juda*. Frauen als Subjekte politischer Macht in der jüdischen Königszeit (Theologische Frauenforschung in Europa 4; Münster 2000) 51-63. The evidence of seals might be helpful too. See the “famous” case of אֵלֶּנָּה פְּדוּיָה and of her seal. On these matters, see N. AVIGAD, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* (Jerusalem 1997) 31, 33; E.M. MEYERS, “The Shelomith Seal and the Judean Restoration. Some Additional Considerations”, *EI* 18 (1985) 33\*-38\*. Yet one is to take into account that the percentage of women among seal owners is extremely low. For instance, it stands at 2% in N. AVIGAD, *Corpus* and may grow up to 3 % if all the names of uncertain gender are taken to be of women (p. 474).

<sup>(63)</sup> See the case of Miptahiah. See for instance, Cowley 13=TAD B 2.7 (and B 29 in B. PORTEN, *The Elephantine Papyri in English*. Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change [Leiden 1996]). One may notice also a wife may own and sell property along with her husband (i.e., they are presented as co-owners), in other words she does not have to be widow to own property. See, for instance, Kraeling 3=TAD B 3.4 (PORTEN, *Elephantine Papyri in English*, B 37); Kraeling 12=TAD B3.12 (PORTEN, *Elephantine Papyri in English*, B 45).



birthings. The genealogies do not provide support for many negative characterizations of women in male discourses of the time and somewhat later periods. Women are not mentioned as whores, temptresses, impurity carriers, as leading men to the worship of other gods, nor are they constructed as essentially “passive”<sup>(64)</sup>. Genealogies created an ideological world in which women cannot be dismissed, and in which they can become very active.

To be sure, they also describe women in ways that maintain and reinforce the traditional female roles within the (patriarchal) family and associate them with divine blessing (i.e., progeny). Yet the same genealogies also provided its (male) readers with a substantial number of instances in which women took upon roles traditionally carried out by males. Moreover, these actions were viewed so favorable that they were associated with divine blessing. In sum, on the one hand, as expected, the genealogies reflected, carried and reinforced the main construction of family and family roles in a traditional ancient near eastern society, but on the other it taught its intended and primary readers again and again that gender (and ethnic) boundaries could, were, and by inference can and should be transgressed by the Yehudite community on occasion, with divine blessing, and resulting in divine blessing<sup>(65)</sup>.

It is possible that this openness is related somewhat with the “frontier” or “pioneer” conditions in Yehud<sup>(66)</sup>. To be sure the social structure of Yehud rested on families as the smallest social unit<sup>(67)</sup>. Given that social framework, the tendency towards group identification in ancient Israel (and most agrarian societies), and the general ideology

<sup>(64)</sup> Of course, the genealogies are not alone in that regard, cf. Judith, Pseudo-Philo.

<sup>(65)</sup> Of course, this “divine blessing” is understood within the ideological frame of a patriarchal society. The Book of Chronicles neither was nor could have been a “feminist” book. It was written within a patriarchal society for a patriarchal society. There is no doubt that within the world of the book and in ancient Yehud the twin institutions of kinship and inheritance were constructed as patrilineal.

<sup>(66)</sup> See ESKENAZI, “Out From the Shadows”. Eskenazi (pp. 32-33) notes that many of the substantive claims advanced by C. Meyers about the role of women and family roles in Early Israel may apply to the Persian period. For C. Meyer’s positions, see C. MEYER, *Discovering Eve* (New York 1988) and ID., “The Family in Early Israel”, *Families in Ancient Israel*, 1-47.

<sup>(67)</sup> Cf. J.E. DYCK, *The Theocratic Ideology of the Chronicler* (Biblical Interpretation Series 33; Leiden 1998) 188; C. KARRER, *Ringten um die Verfassung Judas. Eine Studie zu den theologisch-politischen Vorstellungen im Esra-Nehemia-Buch* (BZAW 308; Berlin – New York 2001) 88-90.

of Chronicles, it is understandable that Chronicles would emphasize and approve the contribution of women for the enduring life of the family household, as well as for the Israelite society in general which is conceived in terms of a larger encompassing household — one which, to be sure, is constructed as having a particular relation with the deity, and a particular set of books and traditions that are grounded in such claimed relations.

The latter consideration leads to the question of the people of foreign origin or “foreigners” who are included in the ideal portrait of ‘all Israel’ in the genealogies in Chronicles. It is possible that such openness is related to the realia of the Persian period, in which provinces are linked with one another through administrative and economical traits. Under these conditions questions of self-identity and the shaping of borders for inclusion and exclusion are likely to arise. One option is to keep that openness and set Yehud apart from other provinces by theological or ideological claims about its relation with YHWH (see above). Within that frame outsiders may become Israelites and may join the genealogies of Israel (the encompassing household) if they are Israelitized<sup>(68)</sup>.

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#### SUMMARY

These observations address the construction of women and their roles in the genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1–9. References to women in these chapters construed them as fulfilling a variety of roles in society, and characterized and identified them in various ways. To be sure, the genealogies reflected and reinforced the main construction of family and family roles in a traditional ancient near eastern society. But, numerous references in these genealogies indicated to the early (and predominantly male) readers of the book that ideologically construed gender expectations may and have been transgressed in the past and with good results. By implication, these references suggested to the readers that gender (and ethnic) boundaries can and even should be transgressed on occasion, with divine blessing, and resulting in divine blessing.

<sup>(68)</sup> See the paradigmatic case of Bithiah in 1 Chr 4,17-18 discussed above.

## **Der Zeuge und das Licht. Joh 1,1–4,3 und das Darstellungsprinzip der σύγκρισις**

Alle neutestamentlichen Evangelien kommen in den ersten Kapiteln auf Johannes den Täufer zu sprechen; alle zeigen sich dabei um eine Zuordnung seiner Person und seines Wirkens zur Person und zum Wirken Jesu bemüht. Dabei fällt im Johannesevangelium auf, „daß kaum eine Äußerung über den Täufer fällt, die nicht in ähnlicher bzw. gegenüberstellender oder abgrenzender Weise über Jesus getätigt wird“<sup>(1)</sup>. Das Johannesevangelium teilt mit den synoptischen Evangelien die „Anfangsstellung“ des Täufers im Erzähltext. Auch hier bewegt sich Jesus auf Johannes zu. Der Täufer wird allerdings „nicht als jüdischer Prophet gezeichnet“<sup>(2)</sup>, wie das in den synoptischen Evangelien<sup>(3)</sup> der Fall ist.

Ich möchte der Frage nachgehen, wie die Zuordnung „Johannes der Täufer – Jesus“ im Johannesevangelium erfolgt. Einen Aspekt der Zuordnung möchte ich stark gewichten, von dem ich glaube, dass er bei der Interpretation der entsprechenden Texte einen hilfreichen Beitrag leisten kann: das antike Darstellungsprinzip der Synkrisis (der Vergleichung). Dieses Prinzip, das im folgenden genauer vorgestellt werden soll, wurde in der Vergangenheit wiederholt für die Auslegung von Lk 1–2<sup>(4)</sup> herangezogen. In diesem Artikel

<sup>(1)</sup> A. OTTLINGER, *Vorläufer, Vorbild oder Zeuge?* Zum Wandel des Täuferbildes im Johannesevangelium (Diss.T 45; St. Ottilien 1991) 254. Vgl. auch W. WINK, *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition* (MSSNTS 7; Cambridge 1968) 94: „Jesus’ work does not just follow the Baptist’s but parallels it”.

<sup>(2)</sup> OTTLINGER, *Vorläufer*, 266; vgl. auch B.-S. CHO, „*Mehr als ein Prophet*”. Studien zum Bild Johannes des Täufers im Neuen Testament auf dem Hintergrund der Prophetenvorstellungen im zeitgenössischen Judentum (Diss.; Münster 1994) 198.

<sup>(3)</sup> Vgl. bes. M. TILLY, *Johannes der Täufer und die Biographie der Propheten*. Die synoptische Täuferüberlieferung und das jüdische Prophetenbild zur Zeit des Täufers (BWANT 137; Stuttgart – Berlin – Köln 1994). Ich danke Herrn PD Dr. Michael Tilly (Mainz) für sein Korreferat zu meinen Ausführungen beim Rhein-Main-Exegetentreffen am 25. Mai 2002 in St. Georgen Frankfurt/M, die hier vorgestellt werden.

<sup>(4)</sup> Im Rahmen meiner Habilitationsschrift (C.G. MÜLLER, *Mehr als ein Prophet*. Die Charakterzeichnung Johannes des Täufers im lukanischen Erzählwerk [HBS 31; Freiburg i.Br. 2001]) habe ich aufzuzeigen versucht, dass

möchte ich der Frage nachgehen, ob das Bedenken der Synkrisis für die Auslegung der "Täufertexte" im Johannesevangelium (1,6-8.15; 1,19-34; 1,35-42; 3,22-36; 5,33-35; 10,40-42) und die Zuordnung von Johannes und Jesus<sup>(5)</sup> in diesem Evangelium einen Beitrag leisten kann.

### I. Das antike Darstellungsprinzip der Synkrisis

Vergleiche und Gegenüberstellungen dienen in der Literatur häufig der Charakterisierung<sup>(6)</sup>. Die Synkrisis, wie sie in der Literatur der Antike anzutreffen ist, unternimmt eine Vergleichung. Der literaturtheoretische Terminus σύγκρισις ist vom Verb συγκρίνειν ("gegenüberstellen, vergleichen, messen") abgeleitet. Es geht beim συγκρίνειν zunächst um eine Gegenüberstellung<sup>(7)</sup> — für sie wird in der Regel das Verb παραβάλλειν verwandt —, die dem Vergleich von zwei Größen dient. Bereits Isokrates (436-338 v. Chr.) lässt gut erkennen, wie das Verfahren angelegt ist, wenn er formuliert:

Meiner Meinung nach dürfen die, die irgendeine Stadt mit Sorgfalt und Gerechtigkeit loben wollen, nicht nur von der einen, die sie gerade zum Thema gewählt haben, sprechen, sondern müssen folgenden Weg einschlagen. Wie wir bei eingehender Prüfung von Purpur und Gold andere Stoffe danebenhalten, die das gleiche Aussehen haben und im selben Wert stehen, so müssen sie auch bei der Betrachtung der Städte nicht die kleinen neben die großen stellen usw., sondern solche, die etwa die gleiche Macht besitzen, gleiche Schick-

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dieses Stilprinzip über Lk 1–2 hinaus die Charakterzeichnung Johannes des Täufers und Jesu von Nazareth im gesamten lukanischen Erzählwerk stark bestimmt.

<sup>(5)</sup> Vgl. auch K. BERGER, *Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments* (Heidelberg 1984) 349: "Von dem biographischen Mittel der Synkrisis ... machen die Evangelien insgesamt häufig Gebrauch. Das betrifft besonders die Vergleichung zwischen Jesus und Johannes".

<sup>(6)</sup> Vgl. auch Aristoteles, *Rhetorik* 1368a: "...Man muß die Person aber mit berühmten Leuten vergleichen; denn das dient zur Steigerung und ist edel, wenn jemand besser als tüchtige Leute dasteht" (Übersetzung nach F.G. Sieveke [München<sup>3</sup>1989]).

<sup>(7)</sup> Beispiele aus der älteren griechischen Literatur bei F. FOCKE, "Synkrisis", *Hermes* 58 (1923) 327-368, bes. 342-344; C. FORBES, "Comparison, Self-Praise and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric", *NTS* 32 (1986) 1-30, bes. 25. Zur vielfältigen Verwendung der Synkrisis in antiken Texten vgl. MÜLLER, *Mehr*, 49-64.

sale und gleiche Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten gehabt haben. Denn so werden sie am ehesten der Wahrheit auf den Grund kommen<sup>(8)</sup>.

Eine Vergleichung setzt nach Isokrates demnach eine Vergleichbarkeit der in den Blick genommenen Größen voraus. Nebeneinandergehalten und damit verglichen werden in der griechischen und lateinischen Literatur der Antike vielfältige Größen: Städte, Länder, Staatsgebilde, Personen<sup>(9)</sup> und vieles andere mehr. Das παραβάλλειν ermöglicht ein Abwägen der verglichenen Größen und damit eine ὑπεροχή, ein "Überragen", somit eine Vorordnung bzw. Höherwertung der einen Größe.

### 1. *Rhetorik – Progymnasmata*

Die Synkrisis wurde in der Antike nicht nur eine ausgesprochen beliebte Methode der Rhetoren — vor allem durch den Einfluss des Enkomions —, sondern auch ein fester Bestandteil in der rhetorischen Ausbildung. Das lässt sich an den überlieferten *Progymnasmata* aufzeigen, in denen die Synkrisis ein zentrales Kapitel ausmacht<sup>(10)</sup>. Es geht darum, einerseits die Unterschiede (διαφοραί) festzustellen und andererseits bei allen Übereinstimmungen eine ὑπεροχή der einen Seite zu konstatieren. Nach F. Focke steht der unterlegene Teil dabei regelmäßig voran, es handelt sich für ihn dabei um ein "synkritisches Gesetz, das auf der Hand liegt"<sup>(11)</sup>.

### 2. *Dionysios von Halikarnassos*

Dionysios von Halikarnassos (zweite Hälfte des 1. Jh. v. Chr.), bei dem das συγκρίνειν auf der Ebene der literarkritischen Methode anzusiedeln ist, wendet die Synkrisis in seinen Arbeiten ausgesprochen intensiv an. Er vergleicht beispielsweise den Stil des Isokrates mit dem

<sup>(8)</sup> Vgl. Isokrates, *Panathenaikos* 39–40 (Übersetzung nach Focke ["Synkrisis", 336]).

<sup>(9)</sup> Vgl. z.B. Isokrates, *Evagoras* 34; Demosthenes, *Gegen Leptines* 68–74; Sallust, *Catilinae coniuratio* 53–54. Josephus vergleicht in seiner *Vita* (65–70) seine Arbeit mit der des Justus.

<sup>(10)</sup> Bei Nikolaos von Damaskus (*Progymnasmata* 10,1–14) sind konkrete Beispiele für Vergleichungen zu finden; Vergleichungen werden nach Theon (*Progymnasmata*, Kapitel X) dann unternommen, wenn eine besonders ausgeprägte Vergleichbarkeit besteht (X, 8).

<sup>(11)</sup> Vgl. FOCKE, "Synkrisis", 331, Anm. 3; S. VOLLENWEIDER, "Die Waagschalen von Leben und Tod. Zum antiken Hintergrund von Phil 1,21–26", *ZNW* 85 (1994) 93–115, bes. 98.

des Lysias<sup>(12)</sup>, um der Frage nachzugehen, welcher Stil höher zu bewerten sei<sup>(13)</sup>. Immer wieder<sup>(14)</sup> kommt Dionysios auf Vergleichbarkeiten bzw. Ähnlichkeiten (ὁμοιότητες) und Unterschiede (διαφοραί) zu sprechen. Dabei können vor allem zwei Zielrichtungen erkannt werden: den spezifischen Charakter eines jeden genauer auszumachen (τὸν ἴδιον ἐκατέρου χαρακτήρα) und eine Vor- bzw. Überordnung oder Höherwertung (ὑπεροχή) zu ermöglichen<sup>(15)</sup>.

### 3. Plutarch

In den Doppelbiographien des Plutarch werden jeweils eine markante Persönlichkeit aus der griechischen und der römischen<sup>(16)</sup> Geschichte zusammengestellt, "deren Lebensumstände, Charaktere und Leistungen zum Vergleich einladen"<sup>(17)</sup>. Die Synkrisis, die als Abschluß den zusammengestellten Bioi angefügt<sup>(18)</sup> oder inner-

<sup>(12)</sup> Dionysios von Halikarnassos, *Über Isokrates* 3.

<sup>(13)</sup> In seiner Arbeit *Über den Stil des Demosthenes* kommt Dionysios auf seine eigene Arbeitsweise zu sprechen (33). Vergleichen dienen ihm zur Bewertung des Stils; vgl. auch den *Brief an Gnaeus Pompeius* (1).

<sup>(14)</sup> S.F. BONNER spricht in diesem Zusammenhang von "comparative criticism" (*The Literary Treatises of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. A Study in the Development of Critical Method* [London 1939, Nachdruck: Amsterdam 1969] 62.79.101 u.ö.).

<sup>(15)</sup> FOCKE, "Synkrisis", 347, Anm. 1. Vgl. auch die Gegenüberstellungen der besonderen Leistungen Griechenlands und Roms in den *Antiquitates* mit der Betonung einer Superiorität Roms; dazu E. PLÜMACHER, "Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte und Dionys von Halikarnass", *NTS* 39 (1993) 161-177, bes. 173-176.

<sup>(16)</sup> In der Regel geht der Grieche dem Römer voraus, nur in wenigen Fällen ist es umgekehrt; vgl. dazu C.B.R. PELLING, "Synkrisis in Plutarch's Lives", *Miscellanea Plutarchea. Atti del I convegno di studi su Plutarco* (Roma, 23 novembre 1985) (Hrsg. F.E. BRENK – I. GALLO) (Quaderni del Giornale Filologico Ferrarese 8; Ferrara 1986) 83-96, bes. 94.

<sup>(17)</sup> A. DIHLE, *Die griechische und lateinische Literatur der Kaiserzeit. Von Augustus bis Justinian* (München 1989) 202. Nur in den Biographien des Philopoimen und des Titus Flaminus werden unmittelbare Zeitgenossen einander gegenübergestellt.

<sup>(18)</sup> Die Vergleichung ist in den Handschriften unmittelbar an die zweite der Parallelbiographien angeschlossen. Übergangswendungen lassen in der Regel deutlich den Übergang von der zweiten Vita zur Synkrisis erkennen. Bei vier der 22 Vitenpaare fehlt eine formale Synkrisis am Schluss. Das hat in der Vergangenheit zuweilen zu der Annahme geführt, diese nicht vorhandenen Vergleichen seien verlorengegangen (vgl. z.B. FOCKE, "Synkrisis", 332, Anm. 1). Diese Annahme wird von heutigen Plutarchforschern bestritten; Pelling ("Synkrisis", 84) spricht von einer weiterhin offenen Frage.

halb<sup>(19)</sup> der Lebensbeschreibungen unternommen wird, ist nach S. Swain bei Plutarch als “the crucial tool in his analysis of human character and virtue”<sup>(20)</sup> anzusehen. Konstitutive Prinzipien sind die Vergleichbarkeiten oder Ähnlichkeiten (ὁμοιότητες)<sup>(21)</sup> und die auszumachenden spezifischen Unterschiede (διαφοραί)<sup>(22)</sup>. Ähnlichkeiten können sich in Charakterzügen, Erlebnissen, Schicksalen oder Taten dokumentieren<sup>(23)</sup>.

#### 4. Weish 11,2–19,22

Das Strukturprinzip der Synkrisis wurde verschiedentlich auch im Buch der Weisheit wahrgenommen<sup>(24)</sup>. In den Kapiteln 11 bis 19 werden die Schicksale der Ägypter denen der Israeliten nach Art einer Synkrisis gegenübergestellt<sup>(25)</sup>. Auch hier geht der schwächere

<sup>(19)</sup> Beispiele für interne Synkrisis: *Tiberius und Gaius Gracchus* werden von Plutarch nicht nur *Agis und Kleomenes*, sondern auch einander gegenübergestellt (1-3); vgl. außerdem *Cicero* 43,2; *Dion* 21; *Sertorius* 1 u.a. In der Biographie des *Theseus* (2) kann man auch eine Voraus-Synkrisis ausmachen; vgl. D. FRICKENSCHMIDT, *Evangelium als Biographie*. Die vier Evangelien im Rahmen antiker Erzählkunst (TANZ 22; Tübingen – Basel 1997) 419. Vergleichen am Beginn von Biographien — vor allem Gemeinsamkeiten betreffend — sind bei Plutarch auch in *Kimon* 3 und *Demetrios* 1 zu beobachten.

<sup>(20)</sup> S. SWAIN, “Plutarchan Synkrisis”, *Eranos* 90 (1992) 101-111, bes. 111.

<sup>(21)</sup> Vgl. die Verwendung in Plutarch, *Alexandros* 1; *Theseus* 2,1; *Demosthenes* 3; *Pelopidas* 2; *Demetrios* 1; *Phokion* 3; *Kimon* 3,3; *Tiberius Gracchus* 2; vgl. auch *Moralia* 243B.

<sup>(22)</sup> Vgl. die Verwendung in Plutarch, *Phokion* 3,4-5; *Numa* 23 (1); *Tiberius Gracchus* 2-3; *Vergleichung Gracchen* 43 (3); 45 (5), *Titus* 24 (3); *Marcellus* 31 (1); vgl. auch *Moralia* 243B.

<sup>(23)</sup> Vgl. Plutarch, *Demosthenes* 3,3-5.

<sup>(24)</sup> Vgl. F. FOCKE, *Die Entstehung der Weisheit Salomos*. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des jüdischen Hellenismus (FRLANT 5; Göttingen 1913) 12-20; H. HÜBNER, *Die Weisheit Salomos. Liber Sapientiae Salomonis* (ATD. Apokryphen 4; Göttingen 1999) 146-149; M. KEPPEL, *Hellenistische Bildung im Buch der Weisheit*. Studien zur Sprachgestalt und Theologie der Sapientia Salomonis (BZAW 280; Berlin – New York 1999) 8,85.

<sup>(25)</sup> FOCKE, *Entstehung*, 12. Nach Focke (*Entstehung*, 15) hat der Verfasser “das Schema einer durchgeführten σύγκρισις schon fertig” übernommen. Vgl. auch H. ENGEL, *Das Buch der Weisheit* (Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar. AT 16; Stuttgart 1998) 123; DERS., “Ein alttestamentliches Buch aus der Zeit Jesu”, *BiKi* 52 (1997) 158-165, bes. 158,161. A. Schmitt (“Der Gegenwart verpflichtet. Literarische Formen des Frühjudentums im Kontext griechisch-hellenistischer Schriften, *Im Spannungsfeld von Tradition und Innovation*. Festschrift J. Kardinal Ratzinger [Hrsg. G. SCHMUTTERMAYR u.a.] [Regensburg 1997] 63-87, bes. 72) konstatiert für das Buch der Weisheit eine “kompositorische Prägung durch

Teil voraus<sup>(26)</sup>. H. Engel erkennt dabei ebenfalls "Züge der rhetorischen Figur der Synkrisis"<sup>(27)</sup>, warnt allerdings vor einer zu einfachen Zuordnung; er gibt zu bedenken:

Außerdem haben die Gegenüberstellungen nicht die in einer Synkrisis zu erwartende Absicht, die Überlegenheit einer Person, Eigenschaft oder Leistung gegenüber den zum Vergleich herangezogenen Taten oder Personen hervorzukehren, sondern es geht um den Lobpreis der Macht Gottes<sup>(28)</sup>.

Beides muss sich nicht unbedingt ausschließen. Dass das Darstellungsprinzip der Synkrisis in einer dezidiert theozentrischen Perspektive zur Anwendung kommen kann, das soll im Blick auf Texte des Johannesevangelium gezeigt werden. Aus theozentrischer Perspektive eine "Vergleichung des Zeugen und des Lichts" zu unternehmen, um Lesern bzw. Hörern eine Höherordnung naheulegen, kann in Joh 1–3 als leitendes Darstellungsprinzip beobachtet werden.

## II. Der Zeuge und das Licht

### 1. Joh 1,6–8

Innerhalb des Prologs — Lektüeranweisung für das gesamte Johannesevangelium — ist zwar von V. 1 an vom Logos die Rede, eine erste namentliche Nennung erfolgt allerdings erst in V. 6. Johannes (der Täufer), der in V. 6 ganz ausdrücklich mit seinem Namen eingeführt wird, geht damit der namentlichen Identifikation Jesu Christi mit dem Logos in V. 17 voraus.

Die besondere Geschichte, die von 1,6 an "erzählt"<sup>(29)</sup> wird (vgl. vor allem das ἐγένετο von V. 6)<sup>(30)</sup>, beginnt mit dem Auftreten des Johannes. Diese Voranstellung bedeutet innerhalb eines synkritischen

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griechische Vorbilder" und verweist für Weish 11,5–14; 16,1–19,17 auf die Synkrisis (ebd.).

<sup>(26)</sup> FOCKE, *Entstehung*, 13; vgl. DERS., *Synkrisis*, 331; ENGEL, "Buch", 161; DERS., *Weisheit*, 23, 185–186.

<sup>(27)</sup> ENGEL, *Weisheit* 23; vgl. auch a.a.O. 185.

<sup>(28)</sup> ENGEL, *Weisheit* 23; so auch a.a.O. 186.

<sup>(29)</sup> Zur Narrativität in VV. 6–7 vgl. auch H. LAUSBERG, "Der Johannes-Prolog. Rhetorische Befunde zu Form und Sinn des Textes", *NAWG, I. Philologisch-Historische Klasse* (Jahrgang 1984, Nr. 5; Göttingen 1984) 189–279, bes. 214.

<sup>(30)</sup> Vgl. aber auch Mk 1,4: ἐγένετο Ἰωάννης [ὁ] βαπτίζων ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ.



Verfahrens in der Regel die Plazierung des "schwächeren" oder "unterlegenen" Teils<sup>(31)</sup>.

Johannes der Täufer ist die erste Figur im Johannesevangelium, die mit Namen eingeführt wird<sup>(32)</sup>. Neben dem Namen sind für die Charakterzeichnung in der Regel die Herkunft bzw. Abstammung<sup>(33)</sup> sowie die Erziehung von besonderer Bedeutung, dann vor allem die Taten und Worte<sup>(34)</sup>, die Beziehung zu anderen sowie die Art und Weise der Lebensführung. Dabei spielen im Blick auf den Täufer im Johannesevangelium — im Unterschied etwa zum Lukasevangelium — nur einige dieser Aspekte eine Rolle.

Hinsichtlich seiner Herkunft wird Johannes — noch vor seiner Namensnennung — in markanter Weise charakterisiert. Von Johannes wird — nachdem klargestellt ist, dass es um einen Menschen<sup>(35)</sup> geht (und nicht um den in VV. 1-5 angesprochenen Logos in seiner Göttlichkeit und kosmischen Funktion), — gesagt, er gehe — zumindest in seinem spezifischen Auftreten — von Gott aus: ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ.

Damit ist ein erster Punkt der Vergleichbarkeit benannt; Johannes kann der für das vierte Evangelium kennzeichnenden "Gesandten-Theologie" zugeordnet werden<sup>(36)</sup>. Dabei fällt auf, dass das

<sup>(31)</sup> Vgl. W. BALDENSPERGER, *Der Prolog des vierten Evangeliums*. Sein polemisch-apologetischer Zweck (Freiburg i.Br. 1898) 4: "Dem uranfänglichen Sein des Logos tritt das Werden des Täufers gegenüber"; H. THYEN, "Ich bin das Licht der Welt. Das Ich- und Ich-Bin-Sagen Jesu im Johannesevangelium", *JAC* 35 (1992) 19-46, bes. 27.

<sup>(32)</sup> Vgl. zur sprachlichen Fassung auch 1 Sam 1,1 (LXX): ἄνθρωπος ἦν ἐξ Ἀρμαθαίμ Σιφά ἐξ ὄρου Εφραίμ καὶ ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ελκανα. Vgl. dazu auch J. BEUTLER, *Martyria*. Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Zeugnisthema bei Johannes (FTS 10; Frankfurt a.M. 1972) 241; O. SCHWANKL, *Licht und Finsternis*. Ein metaphorisches Paradigma in den johanneischen Schriften (HBS 4; Freiburg i.Br. 1995) 115.

<sup>(33)</sup> Vgl. Isokrates, *Evagoras* 12; Aristoteles, *Rhetorik* I, 9,33 (1367b); Cornelius Nepos, *De viris illustribus* XV, *Epaminondas* 1,4; Cicero, *De inventione* I, 24,34-35; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* III, 7,10; V,10,24.

<sup>(34)</sup> Vgl. z.B. Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* IX, 2,58: "Imitatio morum alienorum, quae ἡθοποιία vel, ut alii malunt, μίμησις dicitur, iam inter leniores adfectus numerari potest: est enim posita fere in eludendo, sed versatur et in factis et in dictis".

<sup>(35)</sup> In diesem Zusammenhang kommt dem ἐγένετο in V. 6 besondere Bedeutung zu; vgl. Gen 2,7 LXX: καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν.

<sup>(36)</sup> Vgl. dazu u.a. J.-A. BÜHNER, *Der Gesandte und sein Weg im 4. Evangelium*. Die kultur- und religionsgeschichtlichen Grundlagen der johanneischen Sendungschristologie sowie ihre traditionsgeschichtliche Entwicklung (WUNT II/2; Tübingen

Partizip ἀπεσταλμένος (1,6; 3,28) für Jesus vermieden wird und dass das Verb πέμπειν die größere Rolle spielt<sup>(37)</sup>. Aber auch πέμπειν kann für den Täufer verwendet werden, wie 1,33 zeigt.

So wird Johannes eingeführt als ‘gesandt von Gott’ (vgl. 1,33; 3,28). Von Gott gesandt zu sein wird sonst im Evangelium nur noch von Jesus selbst — und das sehr häufig — und von ‘dem Helfer’, dem heiligen Geist (14,26; vgl. 15,26), ausgesagt<sup>(38)</sup>.

Dabei fällt auf, dass “die soteriologische Bedeutung der Sendung Jesu das Gesandtenmodell”<sup>(39)</sup> überschreitet: “‘Der Vater, der mich gesandt hat’ ist eine Endstufe der joh. Christologie”<sup>(40)</sup>.

V. 7 bringt die spezifische Rolle des Täufers im Johannesevangelium zur Sprache: Zeugnis geben. Damit erfolgt auch eine “Verknüpfung mit dem Corpus des Evangeliums über den Begriff des ‘Zeugnisses’. Für den Evangelisten ist Johannes der ‘Zeuge’”<sup>(41)</sup>. Das Kommen des Johannes — ἦλθεν entspricht dem ἀπεσταλμένος von V. 6 — erfolgte εἰς μαρτυρίαν. “Zeugnis geben”<sup>(42)</sup> “für das Licht” bzw. “über das Licht” (περὶ τοῦ φωτός) — das war seine Sendung und Aufgabe.

V. 7 gibt durch einen ingressiven Aorist auch an, worin das Ziel dieses bleibenden<sup>(43)</sup> (nicht nur punktuellen) Zeugnisses zu erkennen ist: “damit alle zum Glauben fänden durch ihn”. Hier ist eine Ausrichtung auf den anderen erkennbar, die das Johannesevangelium

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1977); R. SCHNACKENBURG, “‘Der Vater, der mich gesandt hat’. Zur johanneischen Christologie”, *Anfänge der Christologie*. Festschrift F. Hahn (Hrsg. C. BREYTENBACH – H. PAULSEN) (Göttingen 1991) 275-291.

<sup>(37)</sup> Vgl. auch SCHNACKENBURG, “Vater”, 277: “Die Sendungsaussagen werden sowohl mit πέμπειν also auch mit ἀποστέλλειν ausgedrückt, zahlenmäßig mehr mit πέμπειν (25 mal) als mit [sic!] (17 mal). Doch dürfte zwischen beiden Verben kein Unterschied bestehen”.

<sup>(38)</sup> K. WENGST, *Das Johannesevangelium* (ThKNT 4,1; Stuttgart – Berlin – Köln 2000) I, 54-55.

<sup>(39)</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, “Vater”, 289.

<sup>(40)</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, “Vater”, 291.

<sup>(41)</sup> H. MERKLEIN, “Geschöpf und Kind. Zur Theologie der hymnischen Vorlage des Johannesprologs”, *Ekklesiologie des Neuen Testaments*. Festschrift K. Kertelge (Hrsg. R. KAMPLING – T. SÖDING) (Freiburg i.Br. – Basel – Wien 1996) 161-183, 176. Vgl. auch OTTLINGER, *Vorläufer*, 25,220; L. INFANTE, *L'amico dello sposo*. Figura del ministero di Giovanni Battista nel vangelo di Giovanni (Diss.; Rom 1984) 177.

<sup>(42)</sup> Vgl. zu Joh 1,7 auch Joh 18,37 mit annähernd gleichem Vokabular.

<sup>(43)</sup> Vgl. u.a. SCHWANKL, *Licht*, 125: “Gemeint sind ... auch die, welche ihm nunmehr im Evangelium begegnen”.

insgesamt prägt. "Es ist dasselbe Ziel, das der Evangelist mit dem Schreiben seines Evangeliums im Ganzen verfolgt (20,31)"<sup>(44)</sup>.

Wir stoßen in V. 7 auf eine erste Verknüpfung der Protagonisten, wobei der zweite bislang noch nicht mit einem menschlichen Namen identifiziert wird (vgl. dann V. 17), sondern allein in seiner soteriologischen Bedeutung auf metaphorische Weise mit τὸ φῶς zur Sprache kommt.

Die Verknüpfung erfolgt in zweifacher Hinsicht:

(1) als Zuordnung: ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός

(2) und damit freilich auch als Unterordnung: der Zeuge ist nicht das Licht, was in V. 8 noch einmal eigens betont wird.

Gerade hier lässt sich — in meiner Wahrnehmung — ein synkritisches Verfahren beobachten. Eine Aussage wie οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς macht doch nur Sinn, wenn eine Vergleichbarkeit besteht, die den einen oder die andere zur der Annahme verleitet, jener sei das Licht. Hier werden zwei Größen miteinander verglichen, um durch die Gegenüberstellung das spezifische Profil genauer zu erheben und eine Vorordnung klarzustellen.

Dabei können durchaus Gruppen im Blick sein, für die Johannes der Täufer die entscheidende Heilsgestalt in der Geschichte Gottes mit seinem Volk war. Dazu bemerkt H. Merkley:

Wenn in VV. 8f pointiert hervorgehoben wird, daß nicht Johannes, sondern der Logos das Licht war, so richtet sich dies wohl polemisch gegen die Johannesjünger, die in Konkurrenz zu den Christen Johannes für die entscheidende eschatologische Gestalt (Messias?) hielten<sup>(45)</sup>.

Und M. Stowasser meint:

Die joh. Gemeinde, die in einem wesentlich konkreteren Spannungsverhältnis zur Täufergemeinde gelebt zu haben scheint als die der synoptischen Evangelien, wußte um die Verehrung des Täufers als 'Licht' durch seine Anhänger. Daran kann es nach V 9 keinen Zweifel geben<sup>(46)</sup>.

<sup>(44)</sup> WENGST, *Johannesevangelium*, I, 55.

<sup>(45)</sup> MERKLEY, "Geschöpf", 176; vgl. auch W. BINDEMANN, "Der Johannesprolog: ein Versuch, ihn zu verstehen", *NT* 37 (1995) 330-354; OTTLINGER, *Vorläufer*, 157; WENGST, *Johannesevangelium*, I, 54.

<sup>(46)</sup> M. STOWASSER, *Johannes der Täufer im Vierten Evangelium*. Eine Untersuchung zu seiner Bedeutung für die johanneische Gemeinde (ÖBS 12; Klosterneuburg 1992) 30 und wenig später (a.a.O. 32): "Die Nähe des Täufers zum Motivkreis des Lichtes sowie das dezidierte οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς von 1,8a gestatten den Schluß, daß dem Täufer der Titel τὸ φῶς zugesprochen wurde und

Hinsichtlich dieses Urteils scheint mir allerdings eine etwas größere Vorsicht<sup>(47)</sup> geboten zu sein. Wie schnell man sich verrennt, zeigt Stowasser — in meinen Augen —, wenn er feststellt:

Ziel des Eingriffes in die Vorlage war es jedenfalls, den Titel für den joh. Christus zu sichern und dem Täufer *jegliche* (kursiv: C.G. M.) Heilsfunktion abzusprechen<sup>(48)</sup>.

Wann wird die Schwarz-Weiß-Malerei in der Zuordnung von Johannes dem Täufer und Jesus ein Ende haben? Nimmt man das antike Stilprinzip der Synkrisis ernst, kann bei aller Überbietung — oder sagen wir im Blick auf den Prolog “Überstrahlung” — auf einen solchen Satz verzichtet werden: “... dem Täufer jegliche Heilsfunktion abzusprechen”<sup>(49)</sup>. Schließlich wird der Täufer in V. 6 als “gesandt von Gott” eingeführt. Dazu bemerkt M. Theobald: “Eine höhere Wertschätzung des Täufers ist nicht denkbar”<sup>(50)</sup>.

“Zeugnis geben für das Licht” — das ist seine spezifische Bestimmung, dahinter steht eine göttliche Beauftragung. So lautet die Leseanweisung für seine besondere Rolle. Der in einer Synkrisis “unterlegene” Teil geht also voraus, wenn von V. 9 an vom “Licht” selbst bzw. vom “wahren Licht” die Rede ist. Von diesem Licht wird gesagt, dass es “jeden Menschen erleuchtet”. Jetzt — mit V. 9 und V. 10 — wird (über VV. 4-5 hinaus) gesagt, dass das Licht selbst in der Welt leuchtet (vgl. auch Joh 3,19; 12,35f). Spätestens mit Joh 8,12 wird bei sukzessiver Lektüre geklärt, wer mit dem “Licht”<sup>(51)</sup>

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es dem Ev. daher notwendig erschien, beim Auftauchen dieses Terminus in seiner Vorlage eine klärende Notiz gegen die Täufergemeinde anzubringen”. Vgl. schon R. BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (KEK 2; Göttingen 201985) 4-5. STOWASSER stellt weiterhin fest (a.a.O. 45): “Die Bezeichnung des Täufers als τὸ φῶς im JoEv deutet ... auf seine Verehrung als eine ‘messianische Gestalt’”; vgl. auch R. SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HThK IV/1; Freiburg – Basel – Wien [1965] 1992) I, 226 (mit Hinweis auf Joh 5,35).

<sup>(47)</sup> Vor einer allzu raschen Identifikation des Täufers mit dem “Licht” durch Täuferschüler o.ä. warnt auch SCHWANKL, *Licht*, 126-127, 145, 146, 393.

<sup>(48)</sup> STOWASSER, *Johannes*, 33.

<sup>(49)</sup> Vgl. VOLLENWEIDER, “Waagschalen”, 96: “Wird Gutes und Gutes verglichen, kann das eine gelobt und das andere doch vorgezogen werden ... die Synkrisis setzt also ein ὁμοιον voraus. Ja, eine gute Synkrisis hat auf das Anschwärzen des einen zugunsten des anderen zu verzichten, sie soll vielmehr das eine groß machen, um es durch ein Größeres zu überbieten”.

<sup>(50)</sup> M. THEOBALD, *Die Fleischwerdung des Logos*. Studien zum Verhältnis des Johannesprologs zum Corpus des Evangeliums und zu 1 Joh (NTA NF 20; Münster 1988) 230.

<sup>(51)</sup> Vgl. auch THYEN, “Licht”, 25, 37-38.

zu identifizieren ist. Nur im Blick auf Jesus, "das Licht der Welt", kann es in Joh 12,36 heißen: "... Glaubt an das Licht".

## 2. Joh 1,15

Nach der Täuferpassage in 1,6-8 ist in V. 15 erneut von Johannes dem Täufer die Rede, der in seiner spezifischen Rolle begegnet, wobei — wie bereits in V. 7b und V. 8b — die Wendung μαρτυρεῖν περὶ τινος mit persönlichem Objekt verwendet wird: "Johannes legt Zeugnis für ihn ab und ruft: Dieser war es, von dem ich gesagt habe: 'Der nach mir Kommende, mir voraus ist er, denn eher als ich war er'"<sup>(52)</sup>.

Die bleibende Relevanz des Johannes wird besonders herausgestrichen, wenn im Präsens (μαρτυρεῖ) bzw. Perfekt (κέκραγεν)<sup>(53)</sup> formuliert wird: "Johannes legt Zeugnis für ihn ab und ruft: ...". Johannes wird also "vom Evangelisten bis in seine eigene Gegenwart hinein als Zeuge für Jesus beansprucht. Er behält diese Funktion"<sup>(54)</sup>.

"V. 15 benutzt (vielleicht; C.G. M.) die rhetorische Figur der Eidolopoiie, die 'Evokation eines Toten zu einer zu haltenden — und vom Schriftsteller wiedergegebenen — Rede'"<sup>(55)</sup>. Dabei unternimmt Johannes ein Selbstzitat ("Dieser war es, von dem ich gesagt habe"), das bei sukzessiver Lektüre des Johannesevangeliums zunächst rätselhaft anmutet — wörtliche Rede des Johannes war bislang nicht zu vernehmen —, durch den nachfolgenden Erzähltext (vgl. vor allem Joh 1,27.30) aber in seiner Bedeutung erschlossen wird<sup>(56)</sup>. "Das Zeugnis bezieht sich auf eine Gestalt der Vergangenheit ... und bekennt von ihr, daß sie Präexistenz besaß"<sup>(57)</sup> (vgl. vor allem Joh 6,62; 8,38; 17,5.24) — ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν.

Auch an dieser Stelle lassen sich Spuren eines synkritischen Verfahrens beobachten. Dabei ist das ὁπίσω μου zeitlich zu verste-

<sup>(52)</sup> Sprachlich springen in V. 15 im Vergleich mit den VV. 14 und 16 zunächst auffällige Veränderungen ins Auge (Subjektwechsel; Tempuswechsel).

<sup>(53)</sup> CHO (*Mehr*, 189) gibt den wichtigen Hinweis, dass κράζειν im Johannesevangelium sonst "mit dem Selbstzeugnis Jesu verbunden wird"; vgl. Joh 7,28.37; 12,44.

<sup>(54)</sup> WENGST, *Johannesevangelium*, I, 69.

<sup>(55)</sup> BINDEMANN, *Johannesprolog*, 330. Vgl. zur Eidolopoiie LAUSBERG, "Johannes-Prolog", 244-247.

<sup>(56)</sup> Auch hier wird eine Verknüpfung von Prolog und nachfolgendem Erzähltext erkennbar.

<sup>(57)</sup> L. SCHENKE, *Johannes*. Kommentar (Düsseldorf 1998) 33.

hen<sup>(58)</sup>. Johannes unternimmt eine "Autosynkrisis"<sup>(59)</sup>. "Das Verhältnis zwischen Jesus und dem Täufer wird immer wieder in Ich-Aussagen des Täufers geklärt"<sup>(60)</sup>. Der, der ihm nachgeordnet ist, ist in Wahrheit voranzuordnen. Der unterlegene Teil geht voraus; der andere ist der Größere.

Schon W. Baldensperger hatte darauf hingewiesen,

dass das zeitliche Früher in der Anschauung des Verfassers und seines ganzen Zeitalters die Form war, in welcher auf untrügliche Weise die Superiorität zum Ausdruck kommt<sup>(61)</sup>.

Und W. Bauer gibt den Hinweis, ἔμπροσθέν τινος γίνεσθαι sei auch im Profangriechischen als "jemanden überholen, (im Rang) übertreffen" belegt<sup>(62)</sup>. Von daher kann A. Otilinger von einer "Überbietung der Chronologie durch die Chronologie"<sup>(63)</sup> sprechen.

Dennoch darf bei aller "Überbietung", die gerade auch in Joh 1,16-18 zum Ausdruck kommt, nicht vergessen werden, dass Johannes seine ihm von Gott selbst verliehene Rolle (vgl. V. 6) für das Johannesevangelium bis in die Gegenwart hinein behält. Das wird vor allem auch im Erzähltext des Evangeliums ab Joh 1,19 erkennbar.

### 3. Joh 1,19-34 — Das mehrfache Zeugnis des Täufers

In 1,19-34 — ein Textabschnitt, der mit dem Prolog eng verklammert ist — spielt der Täufer wiederum eine ganz entscheidende Rolle. Die Verheißung des Prologs (1,7) findet Erfüllung: Menschen finden durch das Zeugnis des Täufers zum Glauben. Dabei kann der Satz καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ Ἰωάννου am Beginn von Joh 1,19 als "Überschrift für den ganzen Abschnitt"<sup>(64)</sup> 1,19-34 gelesen werden.

<sup>(58)</sup> Vgl. auch Mt 3,11; Apg 13,25.

<sup>(59)</sup> Vgl. zu diesem Terminus FRICKENSCHMIDT, *Evangelium*, 423,425.

<sup>(60)</sup> BERGER, *Formgeschichte*, 260.

<sup>(61)</sup> BALDENSCHPERGER, *Prolog*, 44. Vgl. auch O. CULLMANN, "Ο ὈΠΙΣΘΑ ΜΟΥ ἘΠΧΟΜΕΝΟΣ" (1948), *Vorträge und Aufsätze 1925 – 1962*, (Hrsg. K. FRÖHLICH) (Tübingen – Zürich 1966) 169-175, bes. 169; STOWASSER, *Johannes*, 49; P. PILHOFER, *Presbyteron kreiton*. Der Altersbeweis der jüdischen und christlichen Apologeten und seine Vorgeschichte (WUNT II/39; Tübingen 1990) 9,18-22.

<sup>(62)</sup> W. BAUER, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur* (Hrsg. K. ALAND – B. ALAND) (Berlin – New York 1988) 519.

<sup>(63)</sup> OTTLINGER, *Vorläufer*, 231; vgl. auch a.a.O. 97,109.

<sup>(64)</sup> J. BLANK, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (GSL.NT 4; Düsseldorf 1977) I, 122.

Johannes wird als Erzählfigur nicht ausführlicher charakterisiert — im Unterschied zu Jesus<sup>(65)</sup>. Wenn das “aus Jerusalem” in V. 19 betonen soll, von wo die Befragungsdelegation an Johannes ausgesandt wurde, dann wird an dieser Stelle zum Ausdruck gebracht, dass Johannes “draußen” zu suchen bzw. zu sprechen ist, nicht in Jerusalem, nicht in der Stadt des Tempels<sup>(66)</sup>.

In Joh 1,19-34 geht es vor allem um Identitätsklärung. Priester und Leviten werden abgesandt, um bei Johannes diesen selbst zu fragen: “Du, wer bist du?”<sup>(67)</sup> Ein besonders gestaltetes Satzgefüge (mit paralleler Struktur) in V. 20 präsentiert die Antwort auf die aufgeworfene Frage. Diese Antwort wird nicht unmittelbar gegeben, sie erhält einen “Vorlauf” durch den zweimaligen Gebrauch von ὁμολόγησεν und das betonte οὐκ ἠρνήσατο. Es geht um mehr als um eine Sachinformation, es geht um ein Bekenntnis, das nicht nur das Selbstverständnis des Johannes artikuliert, sondern vor allem auch — für ein synkritisches Verfahren kennzeichnend — den “anderen” im Blick hat. Da Johannes selbst diese Antwort formuliert, kann man auch von einer “Autosynkrisis” sprechen.

Der Zeuge formuliert seine erste Antwort in der erzählten Befragung mit einem ἐγὼ εἰμι-Wort, genauer gesagt mit einem ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ-Wort. Damit wird das erste im Johannesevangelium erzählte Ego-Eimi-Wort — wenn auch in negativer Formulierung — dem Täufer in den Mund gelegt<sup>(68)</sup>. Es ist ablehnend auf die Zuschreibung der Bezeichnung bzw. die personale Hoheitsaussage ὁ χριστός ausgerichtet<sup>(69)</sup>. Gleichzeitig werden entsprechende Erwartungshaltungen im Blick auf den Täufer als verfehlt gekennzeichnet (vgl. in

<sup>(65)</sup> Die Charakterzeichnung Jesu von Nazareth fällt im Vergleich mit Johannes dem Täufer im Johannesevangelium wesentlich ausführlicher aus. Er stammt aus Nazareth in Galiläa (1,45f; 4,44; 7,41.52). Im Unterschied zu Johannes sind seine Eltern bekannt (1,45; 2,1.3.12; 6,42; 19,26), ebenso seine Brüder (2,12; 7,3.10). Joh 8,57 bietet sogar eine Altersangabe: “noch keine fünfzig Jahre” alt.

<sup>(66)</sup> Vgl. auch Lk 7,24-26; Mt 11,7-9.

<sup>(67)</sup> Diese Frage kann über den Erzähltext hinaus als eine leserorientierte Frage verstanden werden, die den Lesern bei sukzessiver Lektüre mit auf den Weg bzw. aufgegeben wird.

<sup>(68)</sup> Mit dieser Zurückweisung leistet der Täufer selbst einen entscheidenden Beitrag zur Charakterzeichnung.

<sup>(69)</sup> Zu dieser Titulatur vgl. u.a. S. SCHREIBER, *Gesalbter und König*. Titel und Konzeptionen der königlichen Gesalbtenervartung in frühjüdischen und urchristlichen Schriften (BZNW 105; Berlin – New York 2000) 29; vgl. für das Johannesevangelium a.a.O. 451.

diesem Zusammenhang auch Lk 3,15)<sup>(70)</sup>. Ein anderer trägt den Titel *χριστός* zu Recht. Das wurde in 1,17 bereits präliediert, das wird in 1,41 ausdrücklich (vgl. auch 4,25). Zudem erfolgt eine Stellungnahme solchen gegenüber, die mit einer Zuschreibung dieser Art "ihren Johannes" präsentierten. Dass der historische Täufer nicht nur Hörerschaften punktueller Art, sondern auch Gruppen mit einer ausgeprägten Verehrung seiner Gestalt (vielleicht auch Bindung an ihn) hervorrief, ist uns auch aus anderen Texten vertraut<sup>(71)</sup>.

Die zweite Frage an Johannes (in V. 21) thematisiert eine bestimmte Erwartungshaltung<sup>(72)</sup>. Es geht um die Erwartung des wiederkommenden Elija, wie sie in Mal 3,23-24 und Sir 48,10 zum Ausdruck kommt<sup>(73)</sup> (und z.B. in Mk 9,11-13 anzutreffen ist). Elija wird dabei als nicht gestorben, sondern als "entrückt" gedacht (vgl. 2 Kön 2,1-18). Dadurch kann er erneut in die Menschenwelt eintreten. Auch die angeschlossene Frage "Der Prophet bist du?" kann auf die Erwartung des kommenden Elija ausgerichtet sein. Darauf könnte Joh 6,14 hinweisen, wo die Menschen im Blick auf das erlebte Brotwunder bzw. Zeichen feststellen: "Dieser ist wahrhaft der Prophet, der in die Welt kommende". Vielleicht ist in Joh 1,21 aber auch "der Prophet wie Mose" (vgl. Dtn 18,15.18) gemeint<sup>(74)</sup>. Schon in 1,21 erteilt Johannes der Täufer solchen Erwartungshaltungen im Blick auf seine Person eine Absage; zweimal antwortet er sehr deutlich mit "Nein".

<sup>(70)</sup> Ob man in diesem Zusammenhang von "Degradierung" des Täufers sprechen sollte, scheint mir fraglich; so aber J. BECKER, *Johannes der Täufer und Jesus von Nazareth* (BSt 63; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1972) 13.

<sup>(71)</sup> Vgl. STOWASSER, *Johannes*, 81-82; U. SCHNELLE, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (ThHK 4; Leipzig 1998) 47; H. LICHTENBERGER, "Täufergemeinden und frühchristliche Täuferpolemik im letzten Drittel des 1. Jahrhunderts", *ZThK* 84 (1987) 36-57, bes. 51.

<sup>(72)</sup> Vgl. dazu u.a. G. RICHTER, "'Bist du Elias?' (Joh 1,21)" (1962-63), *Studien zum Johannesevangelium* (Hrsg. J. HAINZ) (BU 13; Regensburg 1977) 1-41; TILLY, *Johannes*, 60-62; S. PELLEGRINI, *Elija – Wegbereiter des Gottessohnes*. Eine textsemiotische Untersuchung im Markusevangelium (HBS 26; Freiburg u.a. 2000) 157-161; 232-233.

<sup>(73)</sup> Vgl. u.a. G. HÄFNER, *Der verheißene Vorläufer*. Redaktionskritische Untersuchung zur Darstellung Johannes des Täufers im Matthäusevangelium (SBS 27; Stuttgart 1994) 321-326.

<sup>(74)</sup> Vgl. z.B. STOWASSER, *Johannes*, 98; SCHNELLE, *Johannes*, 48; WENGST, *Johannesevangelium*, I, 80. Vgl. in diesem Zusammenhang auch W. KRAUS, "Die Bedeutung von Dtn 18,15-18 für das Verständnis Jesu als Prophet", *ZNW* 90 (1999) 153-176.



V. 22 greift die in V. 19d bereits erstmals formulierte Frage “Wer bist du?” erneut auf. Dabei wechseln die Fragesteller von inhaltlichen Vorgaben zu dem, was Johannes über sich selbst sagt (τί λέγεις περὶ σεαυτοῦ;).

Ziel und Gipfel der ersten Befragung (VV. 19-23) ist die Selbstvorstellung des Täufers, die in wörtlicher Rede in V. 23 präsentiert wird. Es ist die “Selbstpräsentation eines Gesandten”<sup>(75)</sup>. An das betonte ἐγὼ schließt Johannes ein Zitat aus Jes 40,3 an, das auch in den synoptischen Evangelien zur Charakterzeichnung des Täufers eingesetzt wird. Johannes der Täufer spricht in dieser Selbstvorstellung allein von seiner Wortverkündigung. Er stellt sich als Rufer in der Wüste<sup>(76)</sup> vor; dort verortet er sich selbst<sup>(77)</sup>. Er ruft sein Auditorium auf, eine Ankunft vorzubereiten, wobei im Kontext des Johannesevangeliums zunächst offen gehalten wird, wer mit dem Kyrios gemeint ist<sup>(78)</sup>.

Die Taufstätigkeit kommt erst in der zweiten Befragung (von 1,25 an) zur Sprache. Interessanterweise wird im Johannesevangelium auf den quasititularen Zusatz “der Täufer”<sup>(79)</sup> ganz verzichtet.

Durch den erneuten Gebrauch von ἀποστέλλειν (vgl. V. 19) kann man in V. 24 einen neuen Erzählabschnitt erkennen. Die Befragung wird fortgesetzt; die Fragenden kommen jetzt (V. 25) auf die Johannes besonders kennzeichnende Tätigkeit zu sprechen: das Taufen — τί οὖν βαπτίζεις ... Das Taufen wird in Verbindung gebracht mit

<sup>(75)</sup> J. BECKER, “Die Herde des Hirten und die Reben am Weinstock. Ein Versuch zu Joh 10,1-18 und 15,1-17”, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu 1899 – 1999*. Beiträge zum Dialog mit Adolf Jülicher (Hrsg. U. MELL) (BZNW 103; Berlin – New York 1999) 149-178, 164.

<sup>(76)</sup> Bei dem Wort ἔρημος gilt es zu bedenken, dass damit nicht notwendigerweise eine Wüste ohne Wasser gemeint ist. Vgl. R.L. WEBB, “John the Baptist and his Relationship to Jesus”, *Studying the Historical Jesus*. Evaluations of the State of Current Research (Hrsg. B. CHILTON – C.A. EVANS) (NTTS 19; Leiden – New York – Köln 1994) 179-229, bes. 207-208, Anm. 99.

<sup>(77)</sup> Bemerkenswert bleibt, dass eine Textstelle wie Jes 40,3 auch in der Qumran-Literatur (vgl. 1 QS 8,12b-14; 1 QS 9,19f; 1 QM 1,2) eine besondere Rolle spielt.

<sup>(78)</sup> Vom atl. Zitat her ist klar, dass die Ankunft Gottes selbst gemeint ist. Vom Prolog des Johannesevangeliums her — vor allem V. 15 — besteht auch die Möglichkeit, dass hier der angekündigte ἐρχόμενος gemeint ist. Allerdings gebraucht das Johannesevangelium κύριος ohne Artikel in der Regel für Gott selbst.

<sup>(79)</sup> Vgl. Mt 3,1; 11,11f; 14,2,8; 16,14; 17,13; Mk 6,25; 8,28; Lk 7,20.33; 9,19; vgl. auch Josephus, *Ant* 18,116.

dem im vorausgehenden Abschnitt abgeklopften Kennzeichnungen zum Anspruch bzw. zum Selbstverständnis des Johannes: "Was also taufst du, wenn du nicht der Christus bist (vgl. V. 20: "... und er bekannte: Ich, ich bin nicht der Christus"), noch Elija (vgl. V. 21: "... Du, bist du Elija? Und er sagt: Ich bin (es) nicht"), noch der Prophet?" (vgl. V. 21: "... Der Prophet bist du? Und er antwortete: Nein").

"Die Antwort des Täufers lehnt sich eng an die synoptischen Berichte an"<sup>(80)</sup>. Johannes antwortet in V. 26 zunächst mit einem betonten ἐγώ und der Selbstvorstellung seiner Taufstätigkeit als "Taufe mit Wasser". Das ἐν ὕδατι dürfte instrumental zu verstehen sein.

Diese Selbstvorstellung der eigenen Taufe als Wassertaufe weckt die Frage nach anderen "Taufen" oder einer anderen Taufe (wie sie etwa im Erzählwerk des Lukas begegnet). Im Johannesevangelium wird eine Gegenüberstellung von Wassertaufe und Geisttaufe an dieser Stelle (1,26; vgl. aber Joh 1,33; 3,5) nicht ausdrücklich. Johannes der Täufer spricht hier lediglich von seiner Wassertaufe. Dennoch kommt er auch auf den "anderen" zu sprechen, wenn er gleich im Anschluss sagt: "mitten unter euch steht der, den ihr nicht kennt". "Auf der textinternen Erzählebene dient dieser Verweis der Steigerung der Erwartungshaltung, die Lesergemeinde hingegen kennt bereits jenen Unbekannten"<sup>(81)</sup>. Damit ist die Präsenz dessen angesprochen, der vom Prolog her (vgl. V. 15) als kommend angekündigt war.

Das ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος aus V. 15 wird in 1,27 erneut aufgenommen (vgl. auch Mt 3,11b-c; Mk 1,7; Lk 3,16c-d.). Wiederum gebraucht das Johannesevangelium eine Autosynkrisis, mit der sich der Täufer dem nach ihm Kommenden zu- und unterordnet. In einer Art Bekenntnis — eingeleitet mit οὐκ εἰμὶ ἄξιος ἵνα bringt der Täufer seine Inferiorität zum Ausdruck: "ich bin nicht würdig, daß ich löse den Riemen seiner Sandale"<sup>(82)</sup>. Die Unterordnung, die der Täufer selbst unternimmt, macht die Überordnung — die ὑπεροχή — explizit.

Durch diese Zu-, Unter- bzw. Überordnung sind die synkritischen

<sup>(80)</sup> SCHNELLE, *Johannes*, 49.

<sup>(81)</sup> Ebd.

<sup>(82)</sup> Nicht einmal den Sklavendienst des RiemenlöSENS traut er sich angesichts der Größe des Kommenden zu. Damit ist die Aufmerksamkeit ganz auf den nach Johannes Kommenden ausgerichtet.

Eckdaten markiert, bevor der "andere" auf der Bühne erscheint und mit V. 29 in den Blick einer größeren Öffentlichkeit tritt.

Den Täufertexten der synoptischen Evangelien vergleichbar bewegt sich auch im Johannesevangelium Jesus auf Johannes den Täufer zu. Johannes sieht ihn auf sich zukommen. Das ist für ihn Anlass, ein Bekenntnis zu sprechen und mit einem Aufmerksamkeitsruf (vgl. 1,47; 19,5.14.26.27), der auf das "Sehen" abhebt, betont (ἰδε) auf den anderen zu verweisen. Ohne dass gesagt wird, woran Johannes erkennen kann, dass es sich um Jesus handelt, wird von einer Identifikation erzählt, die in wörtlicher Rede wiedergegeben wird: "Sieh, das Lamm Gottes, das nimmt die Sünde der Welt" (<sup>83</sup>). Mit dieser metaphorischen Prädikation bringt Johannes der Täufer eine für das Johannesevangelium ganz entscheidende Charakterisierung des Wirkens Jesu (<sup>84</sup>) zur Sprache. Hier "wird unmißverständlich zum Ausdruck gebracht, wem die soteriologische Funktion zukommt" (<sup>85</sup>): Jesus, nicht Johannes dem Täufer.

Mit V. 30 nimmt der Täufer auf sein eigenes Zeugnis Bezug: "Dieser ist es, über den ich sprach (ὅπερ οὖ)". Damit werden die vorausgehenden VV. 15 und 27 mit ihren spezifischen Aussagen in Erinnerung gebracht (vgl. vor allem das ὅπισω μου). Johannes hatte sich ja bereits wiederholt zum Kommenden geäußert, auf den er sich in seiner Wortverkündigung ausgerichtet sieht. Noch einmal wird die zeitliche Priorität unterstrichen (wörtliche Aufnahme von V. 15: ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν). Das Lamm Gottes wird jetzt ausdrücklich mit dem Angekündigten identifiziert.

Erneut ordnet sich der Täufer in V. 31 dem Kommenden zu, wenn er nun auch seine Tauf Tätigkeit als auf ihn ausgerichtet vorstellt: "vielmehr damit er offenbar würde (ἵνα φανερωθῇ) für Israel,

(<sup>83</sup>) Vgl. dazu SCHNELLE, *Johannes*, 49-50: "Die Herkunft der Bezeichnung ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ist umstritten, als möglicher traditionsgeschichtlicher Hintergrund kommen gleichermaßen die Passatradition und der Gottesknecht aus Jes. 53 in Frage". Vgl. auch M. HASITSCHKA, *Befreiung von Sünde nach dem Johannesevangelium*. Eine bibeltheologische Untersuchung (ITS 27; Innsbruck 1989) 54-109.

(<sup>84</sup>) Vgl. M. HASITSCHKA, "Befreiung von Sünde nach dem Johannesevangelium", *Sünde und Erlösung im Neuen Testament* (Hrsg. H. FRANKEMÖLLE) (QD 161; Freiburg – Basel – Wien 1996) 92-107, bes. 96; SCHNELLE, *Johannes*, 50; WENGST, *Johannesevangelium*, I, 84.

(<sup>85</sup>) S. VON DOBBELER, *Das Gericht und das Erbarmen Gottes*. Die Botschaft Johannes des Täufers und ihre Rezeption bei den Johannesjüngern im Rahmen der Theologiegeschichte des Frühjudentums (BBB 70; Frankfurt/M. 1988) 108.

deshalb kam ich, indem ich mit Wasser taufte". Darin sieht Johannes auch seinen eigenen Weg begründet. Sein Gekommensein (ἦλθον ἐγὼ) hat (vgl. 1,6) eine Sendung Gottes zur Voraussetzung und Grundlage. Diese konkretisiert sich nach V. 31 in seiner Wassertaufe "für Israel", mit dem Ziel, den bisher noch Unbekannten bekannt zu machen. Johannes versteht sich als einer, der gesandt (ὁ πέμψας με) ist, mit Wasser zu taufen (V. 33). Das erinnert an ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ im Prolog (V. 6). In narratologischer Hinsicht kann man von einer Analepse sprechen.

Erneut werden in V. 32 die Aussagen des Johannes als Zeugnis verstanden (ἐμαρτύρησεν). Dabei kommt das Johannesevangelium auf eine ganz spezifische Erfahrung zu sprechen. Der Täufer beschreibt eine Schau (V. 32: τεθέαμαι ["ich habe geschaut"]; V. 33: ἵδης ["du siehst"]; V. 34 ἐώρακα ["ich habe gesehen"]): "Ich habe geschaut den Geist, herabsteigend wie eine Taube vom Himmel, und er blieb auf ihm". "Der andere" ist also als der "Geistträger" <sup>(86)</sup> zu verstehen <sup>(87)</sup>.

Die Schau des Täufers für sich genommen löste nach V. 33 noch nicht den entscheidenden Erkenntnisprozess aus. Wie am Beginn von V. 31 heißt es noch einmal: καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ᾔδειν αὐτόν. Die entscheidende Offenbarung ergeht durch Gottes Wort selbst. Die Privatoffenbarung an den Täufer wird durch die wörtliche Rede in V. 33 für seine Hörer bzw. für die Leser des Johannesevangeliums miterlebbar: "Auf wen du siehst den Geist herabsteigend und bleibend auf ihm, dieser ist es, der tauft mit heiligem Geist". Der Geistträger wird nach diesen Worten ebenfalls "ein Täufer" sein — ein für die Vergleichung wesentlicher Punkt. Auch er heißt ὁ βαπτίζων <sup>(88)</sup> (vgl. VV. 28.31).

Doch seine Taufe unterscheidet sich; es ist eine Taufe "mit heiligem Geist" <sup>(89)</sup>. In dieser Taufe ist eine Überbietung der Wassertaufe des Johannes zu erkennen: Allein die Taufe des Geistgesalbten ist die Taufe mit heiligem Geist.

<sup>(86)</sup> Vgl. Jes 61,1 LXX: πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ' ἐμέ, οὗ εἵνεκεν ἔχρισέν με.

<sup>(87)</sup> An dieser Stelle wird uns mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit eine christologische Vorstellung erkennbar, mit der sich das Johannesevangelium und diejenigen, denen wir es zu verdanken haben, intensiv auseinandersetzen mussten.

<sup>(88)</sup> Vgl. auch HASITSCHKA, "Sünde", 97-98.

<sup>(89)</sup> Vgl. die deutlichen Berührungen mit der syn Tradition (vgl. Mk 1,8; Mt 3,11d; Lk 3,16e; vgl. auch Apg 1,5).

*Sehen und Bezeugen* — darin sieht der Täufer nach V. 34 offensichtlich seinen spezifischen Beitrag (ἐώρακα καὶ μεμαρτύρηκα). Die ihm zuteil gewordene Schau wird zum Zeugnis für andere. Wie auch immer das textkritische Problem von V. 34 zu klären ist, ob ὁ υἱὸς oder ὁ ἐκλεκτός τοῦ θεοῦ als ursprüngliche Lesart anzusehen ist<sup>(90)</sup>, auch die Kennzeichnung Jesu als “der Erwählte Gottes”<sup>(91)</sup> bringt in unserem Zusammenhang die Überbietung durch den Mund des Täufers selbst zum Ausdruck.

#### 4. Die Gewinnung der ersten Jünger (1,35-51)

Auch die in 1,35-51 erzählte Gewinnung erster Jünger nimmt ihren Ausgang beim Zeugnis des Johannes. Die ὑπεροχή Jesu kommt in zahlreichen Variationen zum Ausdruck. Der Evangelist will “die Berufung durch das Zeugnis Johannes des Täufers mit der Berufung durch Jesu eigenes Wort parallelisieren”<sup>(92)</sup>.

Auch im Johannesevangelium wird Johannes der Täufer von einem Schülerkreis umgeben vorgestellt. Er steht in 1,35 nämlich nicht allein da, sondern begleitet von zwei seiner Schüler.

Ein Schüler- bzw. Jüngerkreis ist für die Charakterzeichnung in antiker Erzählliteratur von erheblichem Gewicht. Es handelt sich dabei um einen für antike biographische Literatur häufig zu beobachtenden Topos<sup>(93)</sup>. Große Gestalten — vor allem Philosophen — werden von einem Jünger- bzw. Schülerkreis umgeben vorgestellt, um ihre Bedeutsamkeit zu unterstreichen und ihre Wirksamkeit bzw. Wirkungsgeschichte anzudeuten<sup>(94)</sup>. Der Jüngerkreis des Johannes

<sup>(90)</sup> Vgl. u.a. STOWASSER, *Johannes*, 59. Die ebenfalls vertretene lateinische Variante “electus filius” spricht für einen Prozess der Verdrängung bzw. Überlagerung; vgl. schon A. VON HARNACK, “Zur Textkritik und Christologie der Schriften des Johannes. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Würdigung der ältesten lateinischen Überlieferung und der Vulgata”, *Studien zur Geschichte des NT und der alten Kirche* (AGK 19; Berlin – Leipzig 1931) I, 105-152, bes. 129.

<sup>(91)</sup> Vgl. dazu u.a. SCHREIBER, *Gesalbter*, 458-459.

<sup>(92)</sup> F. HAHN, “Die Jüngerberufung Joh 1,35-51”, *Neues Testament und Kirche*. Festschrift R. Schnackenburg (Hrsg. J. GNILKA) (Freiburg – Basel – Wien 1974) 172-190, 182.

<sup>(93)</sup> Vgl. A.J. DROGE, “Call Stories in Greek Biography and the Gospels”, *SBLSP* 22 (1983) 245-257, bes. 245; D.L. BARR – J.L. WENTLING, “The Conventions of Classical Biography and the Genre of Luke Acts: A Preliminary Study”, *Luke-Acts. New Perspectives* (Hrsg. C.H. TALBERT) (New York 1984) 63-88, bes. 73.

<sup>(94)</sup> Vgl. WENGST, *Johannesevangelium*, I, 87, Anm. 31, der auf SifDev § 305 verweist.

wird hier als "etablierte religiöse Gemeinschaft" <sup>(95)</sup> vorgestellt. Über Größe und Zusammensetzung der Gruppe um Johannes erfährt der Leser im Johannesevangelium nichts Näheres. Die Johannesjünger <sup>(96)</sup> bleiben bis auf einen anonym.

Mit V. 36 kommt es zu einer erneuten Begegnung. Wiederum — wie schon in V. 29 — kennzeichnet der Täufer Jesus als "das Lamm Gottes", das es zu sehen gilt. Auf das Wort ihres Lehrers hin begeben sich die beiden Johannesjünger in die Nachfolge Jesu. Das Zeugnis des Johannes "zeigt jetzt bei seinen beiden anwesenden Schülern die Wirkung, die es nach 1,7 bei 'allen' haben soll: Sie folgen Jesus" <sup>(97)</sup>. Zugleich könnte die Darstellung "auch ein Reflex dessen sein, dass Mitglieder der johanneischen Gemeinde einmal zur Täuferbewegung gehört hatten" <sup>(98)</sup>. K. Backhaus hat in diesem Zusammenhang von der "Konversionsdynamik von der Täufer- zur Jesusbewegung" <sup>(99)</sup> gesprochen. Für die beiden Nachfolger ist Jesus zunächst "Rabbi" <sup>(100)</sup>. — In Joh 3,26 wird auch Johannes der Täufer mit "Rabbi" angesprochen werden. — Die Antwort der (ehemaligen) Johannesjünger in V. 38 gibt zu verstehen, dass sie sich in ein Schülerverhältnis begeben wollen. Jesus antwortet in V. 39 auf die Frage der beiden bisher noch gänzlich anonymen Johannesjünger "Wo bleibst du?" (V. 38) mit einer Einladung: "Kommt, und ihr werdet sehen!" (vgl. V. 46) — ein "Leitvers des ganzen Textabschnittes" <sup>(101)</sup>. Die Eingeladenen sollen an den Ort kommen, wo er zu Hause ist. Sie sollen zu Augenzeugen werden.

V. 40 bildet einen Erzählerkommentar, der im Nachhinein einen der beiden anonymen Johannesjünger identifiziert: Andreas <sup>(102)</sup>. Der

<sup>(95)</sup> K. BACKHAUS, *Die "Jüngerkreise" des Täufers Johannes*. Eine Studie zu den religionsgeschichtlichen Ursprüngen des Christentums (PaThSt 19; Paderborn 1991) 160.

<sup>(96)</sup> Die Jünger des Johannes werden in V. 35 οἱ μαθητὰ Ἰωάννου genannt. Die Wendung "zwei aus seinen Jüngern" macht deutlich, dass der Schülerkreis des Johannes im Johannesevangelium wesentlich umfangreicher zu denken ist.

<sup>(97)</sup> WENGST, *Johannesevangelium*, I, 87.

<sup>(98)</sup> Ebd.

<sup>(99)</sup> BACKHAUS, *Jüngerkreise*, 244.

<sup>(100)</sup> Vgl. P. DSCHULNIGG, "Die Berufung der Jünger Joh 1,35-51 im Rahmen des vierten Evangeliums", *FZPhTh* 36 (1989) 427-447, bes. 438.

<sup>(101)</sup> So HAHN, "Jüngerberufung", 182.

<sup>(102)</sup> Andreas ist im Johannesevangelium der erste namentlich genannte, der in den Kreis der Nachfolger Jesu eintritt. Vgl. auch Joh 6,5-9; 12,21-22.

Name des anderen Jüngers wird nicht genannt<sup>(103)</sup>. Mit V. 41 weitet sich der Jüngerkreis Jesu. Dafür sorgt Andreas. Dieser wird fünftig — zunächst oder besser gesagt zuerst (πρῶτον) — in der eigenen Familie. Gesucht (vgl. V. 38) und gefunden haben Andreas und der andere — weiterhin anonym bleibende — Johannesjünger: “den Messias”. In V. 20 hatte der Täufer den Christus-Titel für sich zurückgewiesen (vgl. auch 3,28), seine Jünger und alle anderen auf den Größeren hingewiesen. Der Messias ist nun gefunden — er ist der “andere”, dem Johannes seine Jünger zuführte.

Was Johannes in V. 20 von sich abgewiesen hatte und was also seine Schüler bei ihm nicht finden konnten, nämlich der Gesalbte zu sein, wird hier als in Jesus gegeben bezeugt<sup>(104)</sup>.

In V. 43 ist ein Ortswechsel zu konstatieren, von der Wirkungsstätte des Johannes in die irdische Heimat Jesu: nach Galiläa. In diesem Aufbruch “findet” Jesus Philippus. Wir werden Zeugen einer “Berufung” (ἀκολουθεῖ μοι); Vergleichbares wird von Johannes dem Täufer nicht erzählt.

Nathanael schließlich antwortet Jesus in V. 49 mit einem Bekenntnis, das zunächst mit der Anrede “Rabbi” an die beiden Johannesjünger in VV. 35-39 erinnert, näherhin an ihre Anrede Jesu in V. 38. Dann allerdings geht er über die beiden weit hinaus: “Rabbi, du bist der Sohn Gottes, du bist (der) König von Israel”. Von Nathanael scheint diese Kennzeichnung allerdings vor allem und zuerst auf die Bedeutung Jesu für Israel<sup>(105)</sup> bezogen zu werden, er erkennt und bekennt Jesus als “Messiaskönig des Volkes Gottes”<sup>(106)</sup>. Diese Antwort des Nathanael wird von Jesus als Glauben gedeutet (πιστεύσεις). Wir haben in Nathanael eine erste Erzählfigur vor Augen, von der ausdrücklich festgehalten wird, dass sie zum “Glauben” gekommen ist.

Die verschiedenen Bekenntnisse in 1,35-51 bilden “gleichsam eine Zusammenfassung der christologischen Würde Jesu, die nach-

<sup>(103)</sup> Dazu bemerkt SCHNELLE, *Johannes*, 53: “Bewußt verschweigt Johannes den Namen des zweiten erstberufenen Jüngers, die Hörer/Leser seines Evangeliums kennen ihn ohnehin: den Lieblingsjünger”. Diese Position wird in der Johannes-Exegese relativ häufig vertreten. Doch bleibt die Frage, ob diese Identifizierung des anonymen zweiten mit dem Lieblingsjünger nicht nach klareren textlichen Indikatoren verlangt.

<sup>(104)</sup> WENGST, *Johannesevangelium*, I, 89-90.

<sup>(105)</sup> Vgl. auch PsSal 17,23.

<sup>(106)</sup> DSCHULNIGG, “Berufung”, 442. Vgl. auch SCHREIBER, *Gesalbter*, 462.

her durch das ganze Evangelium entfaltet und präzisiert wird”<sup>(107)</sup>. Dabei bleibt das Gegenüber zu Johannes dem Täufer weiterhin von Interesse.

### 5. Konkurrierende Taufstätigkeit (Joh 3,22-4,3)

Joh 3,22-4,3 gilt nicht wenigen Auslegern als “Abschnitt ... voller Merkwürdigkeiten”<sup>(108)</sup>. Inhaltliche und strukturelle Faktoren weisen darauf hin,

daß sich dieses Ensemble aus Traditionen unterschiedlicher Herkunft aufbaut. Es handelt sich dabei um die Notizen über die Taufstätigkeit Jesu und des Täufers in V. 22f, um das an synoptische Parallelen erinnernde Apophthegma V. 25ff. mit den als Antwort des Täufers angereichten Logien und um den Abschnitt V. 31-36, der im Stil der johanneischen kerygmatischen Rede gehalten ist<sup>(109)</sup>.

Mit einem einfachen μετὰ ταῦτα setzt in 3,22 ein neuer Erzählabschnitt ein: “Danach kam Jesus und seine Jünger in das jüdische Land”<sup>(110)</sup>. Dort (ἐκεῖ) hält sich Jesus mit seinen Jüngern auf (διέτριβεν μετ’ αὐτῶν) und dort — eine Besonderheit der Darstellung Jesu im Johannesevangelium — “taufte er”<sup>(111)</sup>. Inhaltlich wird diese Taufe nicht näher bestimmt (als Taufe der Umkehr, als Taufe zum Erlass von Sünden o.ä.), genauso wenig wie die Taufe des Johannes.

Jesus gegenübergestellt wird in 3,23 Johannes — Johannes, der Täufer, wenngleich er diesen quasititularen Zusatz nicht erhält. Johannes tauft ebenfalls. Das gleichartige Tun Jesu und des Täufers ist die “szenische Voraussetzung für die Gegenüberstellung der Gestalten”<sup>(112)</sup>.

<sup>(107)</sup> DSCHULNIGG, “Berufung”, 445-446.

<sup>(108)</sup> J. ERNST, *Johannes der Täufer*. Interpretation – Geschichte – Wirkungsgeschichte (BZNW 53; Berlin – New York 1989) 13.

<sup>(109)</sup> W. KLAIBER, “Der irdische und der himmlische Zeuge. Eine Auslegung von Joh 3.22-36”, *NTS* 36 (1990) 205-233, 213.

<sup>(110)</sup> Das Verb ἡλθεν ist auch auf die Jünger Jesu zu beziehen. Jesus wird nicht weiter “alleinstehend” vorgestellt — wie im vorausgehenden Gespräch mit Nikodemus —, sondern von einem bzw. seinem Jüngerkreis umgeben.

<sup>(111)</sup> Vgl. KLAIBER, “Zeuge”, 214: Viele Forscher halten diesen “Hinweis, daß Jesus getauft habe, für eine alte, historisch glaubwürdige Tradition”. Eine Reihe dieser Forscher geht allerdings von einer nur kurzen Taufstätigkeit Jesu aus oder spricht davon, die Jünger Jesu seien die Taufenden gewesen (vgl. Joh 4,2). Auffällig bleibt, dass in der späteren Entwicklung der christlichen Taufe auf die Taufstätigkeit Jesu nicht rekurriert wird.

<sup>(112)</sup> M. SCHMIDL, *Jesus und Nikodemus: Gespräch zur johanneischen Christologie*. Joh 3 in schichtenspezifischer Sicht (BU 28; Regensburg 1998) 358. Vgl. auch OTTLINGER, *Vorläufer*, 174.



Die Taufstelle des Johannes wird näher gekennzeichnet<sup>(113)</sup>, die Taufstelle Jesu bleibt ganz offen<sup>(114)</sup>. Verschiedentlich sprechen sich in diesem Zusammenhang Exegeten für eine symbolische Deutung der Ortsnamen<sup>(115)</sup> von Joh 3,23 aus: Dabei wird Ainon vom hebr. אֵינוֹן = Quelle und Salim von שָׁלִים hergeleitet: "Quelle nahe dem Heil"<sup>(116)</sup>. Im Rahmen einer synkritischen Struktur erweist sich eine solche Deutung als durchaus passend.

Die summarische Feststellung "und sie kamen herbei und ließen sich taufen" ist vom Satzzusammenhang wohl auf die Taufe des Johannes zu beziehen. Damit kommt die Breitenwirkung des Johannes deutlich zur Sprache. Der Erzählerkommentar in V. 24 bündelt die letzte Phase der Lebensgeschichte des Johannes, die offenbar bei den Lesern als bekannt vorausgesetzt wird, vor allem dass sein Weg ins Gefängnis<sup>(117)</sup> führte (εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν).

Die Gegenüberstellung der Tauf­tätigkeit beider ließ es schon erahnen. Es kommt zu einer Kontrastierung; es kommt in 3,25 zum Streit (ζήτησις). Neue Erzählfiguren tauchen auf, die Jünger des Johannes (vgl. die Johannesjünger in 1,35.37), von denen der Streit ausgeht (ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν Ἰωάννου). Die Themenangabe des Streits scheint in unmittelbarem Zusammenhang mit der Taufe bzw. den Taufen zu stehen, so dass wir mit einer ersten inhaltlichen Näherbestimmung derselben

<sup>(113)</sup> In dieser Lokalisierung kann sich durchaus eine alte Lokaltradition spiegeln; das ist im Johannesevangelium häufiger der Fall. Zur Diskussion um eine historisch zuverlässige Lokalisierung vgl. u.a. SCHMIDL, *Jesus*, 367-370. Stowasser (*Johannes*, 214-216) plädiert für eine Lokalisierung von Ainon bei Salim in Samaria. Vgl. auch J. ZANGENBERG, *Frühes Christentum und Samaritanen*. Topographische und traditionsgeschichtliche Studien zu den Samaritanentexten im Johannesevangelium (TANZ 27; Tübingen – Basel 1998) 60-81 (Zangenberg erkennt Taufgruppen, die zunächst unabhängig von Johannes zu denken sind).

<sup>(114)</sup> Das Zeugnis des Johannes wurde in 1,28 "in Bethanien, jenseits des Jordan" verortet. Die abschließende Wendung "wo Johannes am taufen war" gab zu verstehen, dass diese Tätigkeit als fortgesetzt zu denken ist.

<sup>(115)</sup> SCHMIDL, *Jesus*, 369-370. Zur Diskussion um Ainon und den Versuchen einer Lokalisation vgl. auch BACKHAUS, *Jüngerkreise*, 254, vor allem aber ZANGENBERG, *Christentum*, 60-67.

<sup>(116)</sup> M. DIBELIUS, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung von Johannes dem Täufer* (FRLANT 15; Göttingen 1911) 111, Anm. 1: "die 'Quelle' ist nahe bei dem 'Heil', aber sie ist nicht das Heil".

<sup>(117)</sup> Ein Gefängnisaufenthalt und eine Hinrichtung bzw. ein Martyrium des Johannes werden im Johannesevangelium allerdings nicht erzählt; zu Mk 6,14-29 vgl. u.a. M. HARTMANN, *Der Tod Johannes' des Täufers*. Eine exegetische und rezeptionsgeschichtliche Studie auf dem Hintergrund narrativer, intertextueller und kulturanthropologischer Zugänge (SBB 45; Stuttgart 2001).

vertraut gemacht werden. Das Stichwort bzw. Thema heißt: *περὶ καθάρισμοῦ*. Geht es um eine Abgrenzung des Taufens beider von anderen Reinigungsriten?

Die Johannesjünger holen sich — nach 3,26 — Rat bei ihrem Meister. Vielleicht sollten wir an dieser Stelle eine Beobachtung festhalten, die sich bei sukzessiver Lektüre des Johannesevangeliums ergibt. Nach dem Verweisen des Johannes auf das Lamm Gottes (1,36), das zwei seiner Jünger in die Nachfolge Jesu führte (1,37), sind andere Johannesjünger offenbar in der Gemeinschaft mit Johannes verblieben. Diese Johannesjünger sprechen Johannes mit “Rabbi” an und bringen damit die Autorität zum Ausdruck, die er für sie hat. Ähnlich hatten das Jesusjünger in Kapitel 1 getan (1,38; vgl. auch 3,2 u.ö.). “Als Lehrer ihrer Jünger stehen Jesus und der Täufer auf der gleichen Stufe”<sup>(118)</sup>.

Die Johannesjünger leuchten den Hintergrund der Streitfrage aus: “Rabbi, der mit dir (*μετὰ σοῦ*)<sup>(119)</sup> war jenseits des Jordan, dem du Zeugnis gegeben hast, sieh, dieser tauft, und alle kommen zu ihm”. In diesem Hinweis steckt zugleich “die Frage: Was sagst du dazu? Was bedeutet das?”<sup>(120)</sup> Jesus wird von den Johannesjüngern zunächst wie ein ehemaliger Täuferschüler präsentiert, der mit ihm war “jenseits des Jordan”. Dann allerdings fällt ein Stichwort, das die Rolle des Johannes in seiner Hinordnung auf Jesus schon wiederholt zum Ausdruck gebracht hat: *ὁ σὺ μεμαρτύρηκας*.

Durch den Aufmerksamkeitsruf *ἴδε* wird nicht nur Johannes der Täufer, sondern auch der Leser des Johannesevangeliums auf die besondere Wahrnehmung der Täuferjünger hingelenkt: “Dieser tauft, und alle kommen zu ihm”. Die Breitenwirkung Jesu, sein Zulauf, der hier mit seiner Taftätigkeit verbunden ist<sup>(121)</sup>, — das kommt durch das *πάντες* besonders deutlich zum Ausdruck — übertrifft also die des Johannes, von der in V. 23 die Rede war. Es geht offensichtlich darum, “die Überlegenheit Jesu über den Täufer auch auf dessen ureigenstem Gebiet zu zeigen”<sup>(122)</sup>. “Was scheinbar als Streit um den Stellenwert der

<sup>(118)</sup> KLAIBER, “Zeuge”, 224.

<sup>(119)</sup> Die Wendung *ὃς ἦν μετὰ σοῦ* unternimmt in narratologischer Hinsicht eine Analepse, die allerdings aus dem im Johannesevangelium Erzählten hinausführt (ein Miteinander von Johannes und Jesus wird nicht thematisiert).

<sup>(120)</sup> KLAIBER, “Zeuge”, 224.

<sup>(121)</sup> Johannes beantwortet in V. 27 die Frage, die seine Jünger umtreibt, selbst. Die Tätigkeit Jesu wird als eine Gabe *ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ* vorgestellt.

<sup>(122)</sup> KLAIBER, “Zeuge”, 215. In diesem Zusammenhang sieht auch Berger (*Formgeschichte*, 222-223, 260) das Prinzip der Synkrisis verwirklicht; vgl. auch STOWASSER, *Johannes*, 181-182.

christlichen Taufe und jener des Johannes beginnt, wechselt” — so M. Stowasser — “in den Problemkreis von Stellenwert und Verhältnis der religiösen Leitfiguren zweier konkurrierender Gemeinden”<sup>(123)</sup>.

Dann nimmt Johannes in 3,28 Bezug auf das, was seine Schüler bei ihm gelernt haben sollten, wovon sie von daher auch Zeugnis geben (können). Das bedeutet, dass die Rede seiner Jünger über ihn durchaus als “Zeugnis” verstanden werden kann (μαρτυρεῖτε). Der spezifische Inhalt dieses Zeugnisses ist ein zweifacher: Der Täufer zitiert sich zunächst selbst mit οὐκ εἰμι ἐγὼ ὁ χριστός (vgl. Joh 1,20). Auch der zweite Teil des Zeugnisses der Täuferjünger über Johannes nimmt Bezug auf Joh 1. Das geschieht einerseits durch das ἀπεσταλμένος εἰμί (vgl. 1,6), andererseits durch ἔμπροσθεν ἐκείνου (vgl. 1,15)<sup>(124)</sup>. Noch einmal wird klargestellt, dass Johannes sich in seiner Wortverkündigung auf den hinter ihm Kommenden ausgerichtet sieht, der “vor ihm war”. In 3,28 wird die zeitliche Priorität allerdings in besonderer Weise gefasst: Johannes der Täufer versteht sich “von Gott gesandt” “vor dem anderen her”. Die zeitliche Priorität wird in eine “Vorläufigkeit”<sup>(125)</sup> umgedeutet.

In V. 29 stoßen wir auf metaphorische Rede mit dem Bildfeld “Hochzeit”. Auch die Metaphorik steht im Dienst einer synkritischen Zuordnung der beiden Größen<sup>(126)</sup>, verbunden mit der Vorstellung von einer messianischen Heilszeit<sup>(127)</sup>. In dem hier entfalteten Bild soll “jener” — sprich Jesus — mit dem “Bräutigam” identifiziert werden, dem sich Johannes als “Freund des Bräutigams” zuordnet (vgl. auch Joh 1,35-36). Das Besondere am “Freund des Bräutigams”<sup>(128)</sup> ist, dass er

<sup>(123)</sup> STOWASSER, *Johannes*, 182.

<sup>(124)</sup> Schon im Prolog (1,15) hatte sich Johannes selbst zitiert. Das ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος wurde in 1,27 erneut aufgenommen (vgl. auch Mt 3,11b-c; Mk 1,7; Lk 3,16c-d), in 1,30 mit dem Lamm Gottes identifiziert.

<sup>(125)</sup> Vgl. auch OTTLINGER, *Vorläufer*, 187.

<sup>(126)</sup> Vgl. auch BULTMANN, *Johannes*, 126.

<sup>(127)</sup> Die “Hochzeit” kann als geprägte Metapher für die Heilszeit verstanden werden. Der Wendung οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ νυμφῶνος liegt das hebräische בני הודו zugrunde. Vgl. zu dieser Wendung M. EBNER, *Jesus – ein Weisheitslehrer?* Synoptische Weisheitslogien im Traditionsprozeß (HBS 15; Freiburg u.a. 1998) 192-196, 202-203.

<sup>(128)</sup> Vgl. zu dieser besonderen Rolle u.a. STOWASSER, *Johannes*, 185-187; SCHMIDL, *Jesus*, 383. Vgl. auch die Arbeiten von L. INFANTE, vor allem seine Dissertation *L'amico dello sposo*, sowie ID., “L'amico dello sposo, figura del ministro di Giovanni Battista nel quarto vangelo”, *RivBib* 31 (1983) 3-19 und den Beitrag von M. und R. ZIMMERMANN, “Der Freund des Bräutigams (Joh 3,29): Deflorations- oder Christuszeuge?”, *ZNW* 90 (1999) 123-130.

in seinem Hören ganz auf den anderen ausgerichtet ist. Doch der Brautführer hat "nur eine untergeordnete, dienende Funktion" <sup>(129)</sup>. Mitzuerleben <sup>(130)</sup>, "wie der Bräutigam zur Braut findet, ist für ihn größte Freude und höchste Erfüllung" <sup>(131)</sup>. Johannes der Täufer hat nach V. 29 an dieser eschatologischen Freude teil <sup>(132)</sup>.

Im Parallelismus von V. 30 wird ein anderes Bildfeld genutzt, um die beiden Protagonisten einander zuzuordnen: das Wachsen bzw. Abnehmen: "Jener muß wachsen, ich aber niedriger werden". Hier wird die in einer Synkrisis angezielte ὑπεροχή ganz ausdrücklich. Johannes der Täufer unternimmt erneut eine Autosynkrisis. "Jener" ist der größere und wird sich als solcher erweisen <sup>(133)</sup>. Dahinter steht ein göttliches "muss" (δεῖ). Das eigene "Niedrigerwerden" unterstreicht die Größe des anderen und gibt ein Signal für die, die bislang in Johannes dem Täufer die entscheidende Heilsgestalt sahen. Wir stoßen hier auf ein für das Täuferbild des Johannesevangelium kennzeichnenden Zug: "sowohl Wertschätzung als auch Relativierung" <sup>(134)</sup>.

Der Abschnitt 3,31-36 wird häufig als Problem empfunden <sup>(135)</sup>.

<sup>(129)</sup> KLAIBER, "Zeuge", 225. Vgl. auch ZIMMERMANN, "Freund", 126.

<sup>(130)</sup> In V. 29 wird (narratologisch besonders interessant) ein Erzählerkommentar als Wort des Johannes verpackt: "Diese meine Freude ist nun erfüllt worden". Die Gegenwart des Bräutigams, das Vernehmen seiner Stimme, das ist die "Hochzeit". Ihre bleibende Frucht nennt der Evangelist "Freude", das besondere Zeichen der eschatologischen Heilszeit.

<sup>(131)</sup> KLAIBER, "Zeuge", 225.

<sup>(132)</sup> Wenn das Johannesevangelium Johannes als "Freund des Bräutigams" Jesus, dem "Bräutigam", zuordnet, dann wird hier in der Zuordnung ein Verfahren angewandt, das in einer ähnlichen Weise bei Lukas zu beobachten ist. Dort stellt der Erzähler — ein Spezifikum im NT — Johannes und Jesus als Verwandte dar. Bei der Begegnung der Mütter in Lk 1,39-56 spielt der "Freudensprung" eine ganz entscheidende Rolle; vgl. dazu MÜLLER, *Mehr*, 114-117.

<sup>(133)</sup> Manche Ausleger denken in diesem Zusammenhang an den Aufstieg und Abstieg von Gestirnen. Erhellend kann vielleicht eine Stelle aus der *Pompeius*-Biographie des Plutarch wirken (14,3): "Aber Pompejus ließ sich nicht abschrecken, sondern er sagte zu Sulla, er möchte bedenken, daß vor der aufgehenden Sonne mehr Menschen sich neigten als vor der untergehenden, um anzudeuten, daß seine Macht im Steigen, Sullas Macht hingegen im Sinken und Welken sei" (Übersetzung nach K. Ziegler [Zürich 1955]).

<sup>(134)</sup> SCHMIDL, *Jesus*, 390.

<sup>(135)</sup> Vgl. H. MERKLEIN, "Gott und Welt. Eine exemplarische Interpretation von Joh 2,23-3,21; 12,20-36 zur theologischen Bestimmung des johanneischen Dualismus", *Der lebendige Gott*. Studien zur Theologie des Neuen Testaments.

H. Merklein hat den Rat hinterlassen, "den kritischen Konsens noch einmal kritisch zu überdenken und zu fragen, ob das Stück nicht doch als Rede des Täufers denkbar ist"<sup>(136)</sup>. Es ist nicht ganz klar, wer eigentlich in den VV. 31-36 als Sprecher zu denken ist: Johannes der Täufer oder der kommentierende Erzähler?

Die Vor- und Überordnung jenes "anderen" wird hier noch einmal ganz ausdrücklich. Seine Bedeutung überragt oder übertrifft allerdings nicht nur die des Johannes, sondern die aller. Wenn es am Schluss von V. 31 heißt, dass jener "aus dem Himmel"<sup>(137)</sup> gekommen ist, sind auch seine Worte, das, was er spricht, himmlische Worte.

V. 32 nimmt das Zeugnis des Gekommenen in den Blick. Jesus Christus ist selbst "Zeuge". Inhaltlich besteht sein Zeugnis aus dem, was er gesehen und gehört hat. Die Wahrnehmung der göttlichen Welt "ist nicht anders ins Irdische transferierbar als durch das Personzeugnis des Offenbarers"<sup>(138)</sup> (Vgl. 1,18; 6,46; 8,26.40; 15,15). Aber: "sein Zeugnis nimmt keiner an". V. 33 rechnet dann allerdings doch mit der grundsätzlichen Möglichkeit, dass sein Zeugnis auch angenommen werden kann, ja angenommen wird: "Der sein Zeugnis annimmt, besiegelt, dass Gott wahr (ἀληθής) ist".

In V. 34 stoßen wir erneut auf die Sendungstheologie des Johannesevangeliums: Der Gekommene ist von Gott selbst "gesandt" (ἀπέστειλεν). Das ist offensichtlich das Ziel der Sendung bzw. des Gekommenseins: die Worte Gottes hörbar werden lassen. Die damit verbundene Gabe ist das Pneuma; "denn nicht nach Maß gibt er den Geist (τὸ πνεῦμα)". Damit erfüllt sich auch die Ankündigung des Täufers von Joh 1,33, dass der Kommende mit Heiligem Geist taufen werde.

Die Beziehung des Vaters zum Sohn ist nach V. 35 so eng zu denken, dass er "alles in seine Hand gegeben" hat. Die Einheit von Vater und Sohn gründet in der Liebe des Vaters zum Sohn (vgl. 5,20;

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Festschrift W. Thüsing (Hrsg. T. SÖDING) (NTA 31; Münster 1996) 287-305, bes. 288. Häufig wird für Umstellung plädiert. Vgl. aber OTTLINGER, *Vorläufer*, 257: "Durch die Plazierung hat die Redaktion erreicht, die irdische Abstammung des Täufers der himmlischen Herkunft Jesu gegenüberzustellen".

<sup>(136)</sup> MERKLEIN, "Gott", 288; vgl. auch W. SCHMITHALS, "Der Prolog des Johannesevangeliums", *ZNW* 70 (1979) 16-43, bes. 42; T. NICKLAS, "Literarkritik und Leserrezeption. Ein Beitrag zur Methodendiskussion am Beispiel Joh 3,22-4,3", *Bib* 83 (2002) 176-192, bes. 188-190. Anders STOWASSER, *Johannes*, 161.

<sup>(137)</sup> Zum Gekommen-Sein "von oben" vgl. Joh 3,13; 6,33.38.

<sup>(138)</sup> KLAIBER, "Zeuge", 227.

10,17; 17,26). So kann V. 36 schließlich festhalten: “Der an den Sohn glaubt, hat ewiges Leben (ζωὴν αἰώνιον)”.

Die Verse Joh 4,1-3 nehmen dann den Erzählfaden wieder auf. Aus 4,1 wird erkennbar, dass die Gegenüberstellung von Johannes dem Täufer und Jesus, die in den Kapiteln 1 und 3 wiederholt zu beobachten war, weiterhin im Blick ist. Auch wenn wiederholt ein “Übertreffen” oder “Überragen” des “vom Himmel Gekommenen” konstatiert werden konnte und Jesus nach 4,1 “mehr Jünger machte und taufte als Johannes”, sollte das nicht die Vorstellung nahe legen, Johannes und seine Jünger würden gering geschätzt oder zur bloßen Nebensache “degradiert”. Jesus verlässt nach Joh 4,3 die Taufgegend des Johannes — (gerade) dadurch bleibt ihr Gegenüber weiterhin ein spannendes Thema des Johannesevangeliums (vgl. 5,33-36; 10,40-42).

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Auffällig ist zunächst die auch in den synoptischen Evangelien zu beobachtende Voranstellung Johannes des Täufers. Jesus bewegt sich auch im Erzähltext des Johannesevangeliums auf Johannes zu. Die Voranstellung kann im Rahmen einer Synkrisis den unterlegenen Teil kennzeichnen. Zur Anwendung kommt dabei eine Erzähl-Konvention bzw. ein Darstellungsprinzip antiker Literatur, das im lukanischen Erzählwerk zu beobachten ist. Die zur Darstellung kommende Vergleichbarkeit<sup>(139)</sup> dient zusammen mit den kennzeichnenden Unterschieden der Profilierung beider — gerade in ihrem Gegenüber. Dabei ist die Synkrisis vor allem ein literarisch hilfreiches Mittel, Kontinuität und Diskontinuität darzustellen.

Die sog. “Einschübe” im Prolog prälude die Vergleichung, die im nachfolgenden Erzähltext des Johannesevangelium unternommen wird. Es ergeben sich bei nicht zu verkennenden Unterschieden<sup>(140)</sup> folgende Vergleichbarkeiten:

<sup>(139)</sup> Der Terminus “Parallelismus antitheticus” (vgl. BALDENSPERGER, *Prolog*, 5) wird der Sache nicht gerecht.

<sup>(140)</sup> Vieles, was für die Darstellung Jesu im Johannesevangelium eine bedeutsame Rolle spielt, hat auf der “Täufer-Seite” keine Entsprechung: Von einer Herkunft Johannes des Täufers wird nicht erzählt. Er bleibt außerhalb Jerusalems. Von Johannes werden keine Berufungserzählungen und keine Zeichen erzählt (10,41). Auch der Tod des Täufers scheint keine besondere Rolle zu spielen.

(1) Beide sind "von Gott gesandt" (1,6; 1,33; 3,28; vgl. 3,17; 3,34; 4,34; 5,24; 5,36-38; 6,29; 9,4; 12,44-45 u.a.). Der Sendungsgedanke unterstreicht die Theozentrik (vgl. vor allem Joh 5,19-20; 5,36; 14,10) der Darstellung. Beider Wege sind im Willen des Vaters "verankert"<sup>(141)</sup>. Doch während die Sendung Jesu "selbst Inhalt des Glaubens"<sup>(142)</sup> ist (vgl. Joh 6,29; 12,44), bleibt die Sendung des Johannes auf Jesus bezogen.

(2) Beide "taufen" (1,28.31; 3,23; 4,1; vgl. 3,22.26; 4,1), doch werden beide vor allem durch ihre Wortverkündigung charakterisiert. In beiden Fällen wird die "Breitenwirkung" des Taufens (3,23; 4,1; vgl. 3,26; 4,1) sowie der "Zulauf" (3,23; vgl. 4,30; 10,41) hervorgehoben. Auf den quasititularen Zusatz "der Täufer"<sup>(143)</sup> wird verzichtet.

(3) Beide werden auch durch ihren "Jüngerkreis" charakterisiert (1,35.37.40; 3,25.26; 4,1; vgl. 2,2.11; 3,22; 4,1; 6,22.24; 18,1.2.19 u.a.). Beide werden als "Rabbi" (3,26; vgl. 1,49; 4,31; 6,25; 9,2) angesprochen und als Lehrer ihrer Schüler präsentiert.

Auffällig — und dem Verfahren einer Synkrisis zuzuweisen — sind auch die Zurückweisungen von Zuschreibungen diverser Bezeichnungen und Titel durch den Täufer selbst: der Christus (1,20.25; 3,28)<sup>(144)</sup>; Elija; der Prophet (vgl. 1,21.25; vgl. in diesem Zusammenhang auch 4,19; 6,14; 7,40; 7,52; 9,17). Damit wird die Zuschreibung auf einen anderen nahegelegt<sup>(145)</sup>. Auf den Kommenden ist Johannes ausgerichtet (vgl. 1,15.27.30); das gilt auch für seine Taufe. Der "andere" ist der Geistträger (1,33) bzw. Geiststäuffer. Das Motiv der Wegbereitung bzw. der Vorläufigkeit (3,28) unterstreicht diese Ausrichtung.

Eine Synkrisis zielt auch auf eine Überordnung. Entsprechende Text-Stellen lassen sich deutlich markieren. Zu erinnern ist an:

<sup>(141)</sup> Vgl. STOWASSER, *Johannes*, 37.

<sup>(142)</sup> L. SCHENKE, "Christologie als Theologie. Versuch über das Johannesevangelium", *Von Jesus zum Christus*. Christologische Studien. Festgabe P. Hoffmann (Hrsg. R. HOPPE – U. BUSSE) (BZNW 93; Berlin – New York 1998) 445-465, 453. Von einem Glauben gegenüber Johannes dem Täufer oder gar einem Glauben an ihn wird nicht erzählt (vgl. im Blick auf Jesus: 1,12; 2,23; 3,16; 3,18; 3,36; 4,39.41; 6,29; 10,42; 14,1). Aber sein Zeugnis ist nach 1,7 auf das zum-Glauben-Kommen (aller!) ausgerichtet.

<sup>(143)</sup> Vgl. Mt 3,1; 11,11-12; 14,2.8; 16,14; 17,13; Mk 6,25; 8,28; Lk 7,20.33; 9,19; vgl. auch Josephus, Ant 18,116.

<sup>(144)</sup> Vgl. in diesem Zusammenhang auch Joh 1,41; 4,24; (1,17; 17,3).

<sup>(145)</sup> Vgl. SCHNACKENBURG, "Vater", 279: "Schon die Abweisung Johannes des Täufers, daß er 'der Prophet' sei (1,21.25), kann ein Indiz dafür sein, daß der Titel in einem besonderen Sinn Jesus vorbehalten wird".

(1) die Selbst-Unterordnung in 1,27 (nicht würdig, die Riemen seiner Sandale zu öffnen)<sup>(146)</sup>;

(2) das Übergehen von Johannesjüngern in den Schülerkreis Jesu. Johannes führt sogar selbst Jesus Jünger zu (vgl. 1,40), (auch wenn er selbst nicht sein "Jünger" wird);

(3) die Zuordnung im Bild vom "Freund des Bräutigams" und dem "Bräutigam" selbst mit der entsprechenden "Freude" am Wort des anderen (3,29);

(4) das Bild der Lampe (5,35), das sich in vergleichbarer Weise auslegen lässt;

(5) der Ausfall von Wunder- bzw. Zeichenerzählungen auf der "Johannes-Seite".

(6) Johannes bleibt der "Zeuge für das Licht" — im Gegenüber zum "Licht" (1,9.11; 3,19; 8,12; 9,5). Aber: Johannes bleibt bis in die Gegenwart der Leser für das Johannesevangelium der menschliche "Zeuge" (vgl. 1,7.8.15.19.32.34; vgl. auch 3,26).

Wertschätzung und Relativierung<sup>(147)</sup> — Mit diesen beiden Begriffen lässt sich vielleicht die Zielsetzung des synkritischen Verfahrens kennzeichnen. Die Parallelisierung verfolgt das Ziel, eine qualitative Überlegenheit zu bezeugen und genauer zu kennzeichnen.

Damit stellt sich noch einmal die Frage nach einem möglichen Hintergrund für ein solches Verfahren. Häufig wird von einer Konkurrenz-Situation zwischen christlicher Gemeinde und Täufergemeinde gesprochen. In der Tat könnte die "Überschätzung" des Täufers durch entsprechende Anhänger den Ausgangspunkt für eine Gegenüberstellung der beiden gebildet haben<sup>(148)</sup>. Die neutestamentlichen Evangelien unternehmen eine (massive) "Christianisierung des Täufers". Das Täuferbild des Johannesevangeliums kann vielleicht als eine besonders geartete Einladung an Täuferanhänger<sup>(149)</sup> verstanden werden, die einen Akt der Zustimmung intendiert.

<sup>(146)</sup> Vgl. auch die Zu- bzw. Unterordnungen, die der Täufer selbst unternimmt: Joh 1,15; 1,27; 3,30.

<sup>(147)</sup> Vgl. auch SCHMIDL, *Jesus*, 390.

<sup>(148)</sup> Vgl. auch RICHTER, "Elias", 13 (mit den [ebd.] Anm. 77 genannten Autoren); SCHMIDL, *Jesus*, 389. LICHTENBERGER, "Täufergemeinden", 51,53, spricht von einer Auseinandersetzung mit der "Christologie" der Täuferbewegung bzw. Täufergemeinde. Vielleicht wird auch Stellung bezogen gegen ein Ignorieren Jesu.

<sup>(149)</sup> Vgl. SCHMIDL, *Jesus*, 396.



Auf jeden Fall kommt es zu einer "Integration des Täufers bei gleichzeitiger Unterordnung unter die Gestalt Jesu"<sup>(150)</sup>. Ein "Täufer ohne Jesus" ist "für die christliche Gemeinde unvorstellbar"<sup>(151)</sup>.

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#### SUMMARY

The ancient principle of presentation, syncrisis, repeatedly used in research for the interpretation of Luke 1–2, is applied here. In this article the author first presents the most important aspects of syncrisis and then moves to the question whether or not one can present a valid study, with the use of syncrisis, for the interpretation of the 'John the Baptist texts' in John's Gospel (1,6-8.15; 1,19-34; 1,35-42; 3,22-36; 4,1-3; 5,33-35; 10,40-42) and for the relationship of John and Jesus. We arrive at a positive result; the repeated signals 'towards', 'under', etc. are recognizably indicators of ordered relationships. The comparison that comes to light serves together with the visible differences in the profiling of each of them — precisely in their opposition to each other. Thus, syncrisis is revealed as a rich literary means to show continuity and discontinuity. Evaluation and relativisation, integration and subordination to the figure of Jesus determine the presentation of the Baptist in John's Gospel. The appropriate ordering of his person to Jesus is shown also in the area of metaphorical speech, when John is presented as "the friend of the bridegroom" (John 3,29).

<sup>(150)</sup> So D.-A. KOCH, "Der Täufer als Zeuge des Offenbarers. Das Täuferbild von Joh 1,19-34 auf dem Hintergrund von Mk 1,2-11", *The Four Gospels* 1992. Festschrift für F. Neirynck (Hrsg. F. VAN SEGBROECK) (BETL 100; Leuven 1992) III, 1963-1984, 1984. Zur Integration von Täuferanhängern vgl. auch ZANGENBERG, *Christentum*, 77,80.

<sup>(151)</sup> OTTLINGER, *Vorläufer*, 245.

**Rom 7,7-25 and the Impotence of the Law.  
A Fresh Look at a Much-Debated  
Topic Using Literary-Rhetorical Analysis**

One of the most frequently debated sections of the Epistle to the Romans is undoubtedly Rom 7,7-25. Not only does the much-discussed question of the identity of the ἐγώ frequently raise problems among scholars, but the affirmations concerning the Law have given rise to an increasing interest in this chapter. Obviously, this subject is very interesting in itself, but a number of seemingly contradictory verdicts on the Law make this section particularly complex and at the same time stimulating to exegesis. How is it in fact possible to state that the Law is holy (v. 12), spiritual (v. 14) and divine (vv. 22.25), and that its commandment is holy, righteous and good (v. 12), while saying that sin operates every sinful desire by means of the commandment (v. 8), and that sin came to life (v. 9) and killed (v. 11) through the commandment? Or that without the Law sin is not operative (vv. 9-10), if in Rom 5,12 sin entered into the world with Adam, while the Law was introduced much later, with Moses (Rom 5,20)? No wonder such a complex chapter has caused such great debate among scholars. H. Räisänen states that here Paul, after starting with “an ‘apology for the Law’... glides back to a criticism of the Law”, and that “Paul is involved in a glaring self-contradiction”<sup>(1)</sup>. This interpretation probably represents one extreme of the wide spectrum of scholars’ evaluations of the chapter, but there is no doubt that no consensus has been reached on its inner coherence, or on its main subject matter.

I have treated this pericope in my doctoral dissertation<sup>(2)</sup>, where I argued that its main topic is not an anthropological one, but rather a discussion about the Law (Torah), where the Law is not primarily defended, but its inability to rescue man from the bondage of sin and death is reiterated throughout the whole chapter. Surely here Paul seems to juxtapose positive and negative judgements on the Law. However, this seeming juxtaposition is only apparent; in fact, Paul knowingly argues

<sup>(1)</sup> H. RÄISÄNEN, *Paul and the Law* (WUNT 29; Tübingen 1983) 110 and 142 respectively.

<sup>(2)</sup> S. ROMANELLO, *Una legge buona ma impotente* (Supplementi RivBib 35; Bologna 2000).

by means of a number of contrasting statements, aiming to reiterate the powerlessness of the Law even in the presence of statements that might suggest the contrary. The positive statements about the nature of the Law are never so emphatically made in the Pauline Corpus as in this pericope, and some interpreters may be surprised by them. Yet it is important to recognise their function in this chapter. In this paper, I intend to prove that the positive evaluations of the Law are formulated by Paul in such a way that they do not diminish the judgements about its powerless character. This method of argumentation can be defined as rhetorical *concessio*, in which some points (e.g. the positive nature of the Law) are not denied, but minimized in order to emphasise different ones (e.g. the powerless character of the Law). Or, to put it more specifically, Paul asserts that the Law is not able to counter sin, but at the same time he rejects some possible consequences of this thesis (that the Law is in itself somewhat sinful). But the main point is that the Law remains powerless, notwithstanding its nature.

In this paper I will test my view of this Pauline argumentation mostly against some contributions published after my doctoral dissertation. My aim is twofold. On one hand I intend to underline the plausibility and the necessity of a kind of rhetorical analysis of the text that cannot be regarded simply as classical rhetorical criticism, but combines rhetorical and literary criteria in order to achieve the best comprehension of the text. This kind of analysis is eminently supported by J.-N. Aletti<sup>(3)</sup>, and enables us to go beyond the surface of the text and explore its theological interest. Broadening the analysis already carried out in my previous work, I will also set this chapter in relation to the overall Pauline soteriology, in order to investigate whether there is any coherence in Paul's evaluations of the Law when these are compared to his depiction of the believers' status. First I will subject the pericope to the first kind of analysis in order to detect its real *dispositio*, which does not necessarily conform in every detail to the rules laid down by rhetoricians. After having pointed out through this analysis the most important statements of the pericope and the difficulties raised by them, I will consider the general evaluation of the Law.

<sup>(3)</sup> Among his methodologically weighty studies, particularly on Romans, I refer to J.-N. ALETTI, *Comment Dieu est-il juste?* (Paris 1991); ID., "La *dispositio* rhétorique dans les épîtres pauliniennes", *NTS* 38 (1992) 385-401; ID., *Israël et la loi dans la lettre aux Romains* (LD 173; Paris 1998); ID., "Paul et la rhétorique. État de la question et propositions", *Paul de Tarse* (ed. J. SCHLOSSER) (LD 65; Paris 1996) 27-50.

I. What is the main theme in 7,7-25?  
The significance of the *propositio*

It is not necessary to demonstrate here that Rom 7,7-25 constitutes a literary unit, as almost all the interpreters agree on this<sup>(4)</sup>. Problems arise when one examines the relationship between this pericope and the six previous verses, and when one investigates the statement or thesis encompassing this argument. In this regard, O. Hofius is probably the most recent scholar to have asserted that Rom 7,7-25 follows upon the statements of Rom 7,5, while the subsequent unit, Rom 8,1-17, follows upon Rom 7,6<sup>(5)</sup>. Hofius is surely right in reading most of the affirmations of Rom 7,5 (the fleshly conduct of life, in which sinful passions dominate) as present in the pericope of 7,7-25. Furthermore, the contrast between fleshly and spiritual conduct of life is clear in Rom 8,1-7 (see vv. 5-6). As Rom 7,7-25 depicts the fleshly and sinful condition of the "I", that contrast also occurs between these two pericopes, and is clearly anticipated in Rom 7,5-6. All these data constitute the framework for the interpretation of Rom 7,7-25. This notwithstanding, Hofius's proposal seems to me, on the whole, to be unconvincing. In fact, in Rom 7,14 the Law is qualified as πνευματικός, but in Rom 7,6 as γράμμα, so Rom 7,5-6 does not appear to introduce this qualification in the following verses. However, the most decisive fact is that the question on the possible equalisation between Law and sin in Rom 7,7a is not announced in the previous verses. That is why Rom 7,5-6 can be considered as transition that presents in advance some characteristics of the following verses but not the thematic statement upon which the following argumentation as a whole depends.

Let me clarify one point. This precise distinction between transition and thematic statement could be considered an exercise in academic fussiness. Is it not true that the transition can include in itself the thematic announcement of the following argument? It is true, but is not always the case. If Hofius's evaluation is correct, then Rom 7,7-25 must be considered primarily as an anthropological piece, governed by the statement in Rom 7,5 ὅτε γὰρ ἡμεν ἐν τῇ σαρκί. But the focus in Rom 7,7 immediately shifts from anthropology to evaluations on

<sup>(4)</sup> For a detailed justification of this assertion see ROMANELLO, *Una legge*, 69-97.

<sup>(5)</sup> O. HOFIUS, *Paulusstudien II* (WUNT 143; Tübingen 2002) 104-154, especially 109-110.

the Law. True, these problems are introduced in Rom 7,5, in which sinful passions are stimulated through the Law, but even if that verse could be seen as raising the question, it says nothing about the moment at which it will be theoretically answered. Furthermore, statements that associate the Law and sin are not unique in Paul: see Rom 5,20-21; 6,14-15, to confine ourselves only to Romans<sup>(6)</sup>. Rom 7,6 is nothing but one of these. They increase a sense of suspense in the reader towards the problem of the relationship between Law and sin, and this problem must certainly be faced, but the suspense does not end until Rom 7,7.

The distinction between transition and thematic statement turns out to be not a minor detail, but a task of fundamental significance in order to bring the real argument of a chapter into focus<sup>(7)</sup>. Ancient rhetoricians defined the thematic statement of an argumentation as *propositio*<sup>(8)</sup>, and assigned to it the basic function of stating the matter of those things that the following argumentation would prove. For this reason interpreters need accurately to detect the *propositio* of an argumentation, because it is only by means of it that the basic matter of the argumentation can be brought into focus. The fact that Paul often makes use of inchoate propositions does not invalidate this methodological assumption, but requires the interpreter to pay more attention to his peculiarities.

The question in v. 7a consequently raises a new discussion, and for this reason it constitutes the *propositio* of the subsequent argumentation. A similar question is encountered in v. 13a, but it simply restates some of the matters discussed rather than introducing a basically new theme. It is true that from v. 14 onwards anthropological considerations gain more space, but on these premises the interpreter must ask himself the reason for these considerations in an argumentation

<sup>(6)</sup> According to RÄISÄNEN, *Paul*, 141, we are dealing here with the causative function of the Law in relation to sin, that is that the Law itself in some way brings about sin.

<sup>(7)</sup> For example, A. GIENIUSZ, *Romans 8:18-30*. "Suffering Does Not Thwart the Future Glory" (Atlanta 1999) 71-76, rightly criticises interpreters who see in Rom 8,17c the thesis of the following chapter. In fact that verse speaks about believers' sufferings and future glorification with Christ, while from 8,18 onwards the argument is about believers' sufferings that are analogous to those of creation, and are not precisely sufferings in solidarity with Christ. Also in this case distinguishing between a transition verse and the real thematic statement of a chapter is fundamental.

<sup>(8)</sup> See Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 3.13 1414a-b; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 4.4.

devoted to the Law. It is important to note first of all that in vv. 18-21 the adjectives ἀγαθόν and καλόν, because of the qualifications of the Law in vv. 12.14.16, denote the Law and not a kind of universal moral experience<sup>(9)</sup>. Discussions on the Law, then, do not seem to be discarded in the second half of this chapter, despite its more anthropological character.

## II. Law and sin in Rom 7,7-11: a paradoxical mutual relationship

The former correlation between Mosaic Law and sin (Rom 5,20-21; 6,14-15; 7,5-6), and the following quotation of the tenth commandment clearly show that the question in v. 7 is related to Mosaic Law<sup>(10)</sup>. The possible sinful qualification of the Law evoked by the question is immediately rejected by a characteristic μὴ γένοιτο, followed by the strong adversative ἀλλά. It is important to establish whether this conjunction opposes only the question or the whole of what has been stated hitherto. In other words, one can say both:

CASE 1: “Is A black? No, on the contrary (= ἀλλά) it is white”, or  
 CASE 2: “Is A black? No, nevertheless (= ἀλλά) it is grey”.

In case 1 “ἀλλά” opposes the question and carries on the denial expressed by the negation. In case 2 “ἀλλά” opposes the whole of what is said, including the negation and, not reaffirming what was just denied, nevertheless “specifies” the negation, clarifies it and carries the argumentation to more balanced considerations. Only the context can assist in solving this matter. Now, v. 7b affirms that there is a relationship of knowledge between Law and sin, but it does not clarify the nature of that knowledge; it remains vague and does not help to

<sup>(9)</sup> Pace J.M. DÍAZ-RODELAS, *Pablo y la ley*. La novedad de Rom 7,7-8,4 en el conjunto de la reflexión paulina sobre la ley (Estella 1994) 172-174.

<sup>(10)</sup> I disagree with S. PEDERSEN, “Paul’s Understanding of the Biblical Law”, *NT 44* (2002) 1-34, for whom Paul shifts the accent from Mosaic to a creatural law implying a person’s radical obedience to God the Creator. The incomplete quotation of the tenth commandment points to a fundamental attitude towards God, as Pedersen rightly asserts, but this attitude is recorded precisely in Mosaic Law, not apart from it. Such a thesis can only be proposed ignoring the rhetorical weight of a *propositio*, from which it is clear that it is only the Torah which constitutes the main interest for Paul. The reason for the incomplete quotation of the tenth commandment, furthermore, could be found in Jewish ideas, in which the prohibition of coveting represents the essential summation of Mosaic Law: see references and discussion in DÍAZ-RODELAS, *Pablo y la ley*, 152-154.

solve the problem. The answer comes in v. 7c, which is stated in a way parallel to the previous verse and stands as an interpretation of it. It affirms that the Law, forbidding desire, actually awakens it or, more precisely, awakens "every kind of desire" (v. 8a). As "desire" (ἐπιθυμία) stands in parallel with "sin" in v. 7, and as it is forbidden by the Law, by "desire" one must here understand "sinful desire". Furthermore, as the Law has already pronounced the commandment "do not desire", the conditional clause must be intended as unreal in the past, notwithstanding the absence of ἄν in the apodosis. The main point here is that by pronouncing its commandment, the Law brings about sinful desire. The way in which the Law does so is quickly bypassed by Paul: one may refer to the desire for forbidden things, but it is clear that he does not direct the reader's attention to this matter. What emerges with clarity from these assertions is: 1) the Law in itself is not sinful inasmuch as it forbids what is sinful — surely a positive characteristic <sup>(1)</sup>; 2) paradoxically, in so doing it awakens in man what it forbids, by feeding the sin which it should be fighting. The knowledge to which v. 7 refers, which in itself could also be evaluated in different terms, proves to be a pragmatic one: the Law makes sin be known because it makes it practicable. From v. 8 onwards this state of things is ascribed to sin itself, which is personified and proves to be the ultimate factor of its own empowerment, which might well be taken to be a disclaimer of the Law. It nevertheless remains true that sin operates through the commandment, and that, despite its positive nature, the Law increases the possibilities of sin. The διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς statement in v. 8a recalls the διὰ τοῦ νόμου statement in v. 5, but this kind of affirmation is a causative one, that is to say it restates the instrumentality of Law in increasing sin itself. At this point it is necessary to deduce that what constitutes a problem in former Pauline statements, that is the relationship between Law and sin, is here merely affirmed again, despite the denial of the equalisation between these two entities. If this is the case, then the negative statement in v. 7a is not simply restated, but the development of the argument underlines

<sup>(1)</sup> This constitutes a sufficient reason to rule out R. Bultmann's legalistic interpretation which has influenced the subsequent debate, according to which the Law causes men to sin because it causes his *hybris*, his desire to present himself before God relying on his own obedience to the law. The problem here is not that the law is obeyed, but that it is transgressed. See R. BULTMANN, "Römer 7 und die Anthropologie des Paulus", *Imago Dei* (FS. G. Krüger) (Hrsg. H. BORNKAMM) (Giessen 1932) 53-62.

some further points not merely implied in that denial. That means that what we have here is case 2 of the above-mentioned possibilities<sup>(12)</sup>. Therefore, if v. 7a states an emphatic disclaimer of the Law, the subsequent argument does not seem to be included in that logic. Obviously, it does not deny what v. 7a states: it simply affirms (also) other things which stand in apparent tension with what is said in v. 7a.

Vv. 8b-10a are among the most puzzling in the whole Bible. First of all, their reversal composition must be made clear, a composition which represents a former time without the Law and commandment, and another period which saw the advent of a commandment, an expression of the whole Law<sup>(13)</sup>. This composition establishes a complex relationship between the life and death of sin and the life and death of the “I”, depending on the absence or presence of the Law. Without the Law, sin is dead and the “I” lives, whereas with the coming of the commandment sin springs to life and the “I” dies. Since the subject — here dead — is speaking, one is obliged to interpret his death in some metaphorical and spiritual way, that of “losing the ultimate, eternal life”<sup>(14)</sup>. This state of things is ultimately ascribed to the work of sin. The semantic field of “death” and “life”, referred to sin, might be established inductively by its use in the corresponding depiction of the “I” condition, thereby denoting the lack or materialisation of the activity of sin. The verb ἀνέζησεν is unusual, being present only here and in Luke 15,4. The preposition ἀνά could retain its literal value of “anew”, but it is difficult to detect a time in which sin was operative before the events reported in these verses. So it is more likely that it serves partly to attenuate the relationship between sin and the commandment, suggesting that even if sin sprang to life on the arrival of the commandment, it is not true that it simply “lived”, owing its whole existence to the Law<sup>(15)</sup>. Should this be the

<sup>(12)</sup> Among recent commentaries, this grammatical interpretation is held by D.J. MOO, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids 1996) 432, A. PITTA, *Lettera ai Romani* (Milano 2001) 269, T. SCHREINER, *Romans* (Grand Rapids 1998) 365, but the hermeneutical consequences of this are not equally present in their works. For example, only MOO, *Romans*, 434, recognises expressly that the knowledge which v. 7 refers to is an experiential one, while PITTA, *Romani*, 271, interprets unexplainably that same knowledge independently of the following development.

<sup>(13)</sup> See the graphic disposition of these verses and more detailed justifications of it in ROMANELLO, *Una legge*, 112-118.

<sup>(14)</sup> BDAG, 111.

<sup>(15)</sup> See also ALETTI, *Israël*, 139. One cannot but wonder how PITTA, *Romani*, 271, n. 277, ascribed to me an interpretation according to which the verb



case, then the starting disclaimer of the Law would lack any plausibility.

In spite of this nuance, what is established in these verses is a dramatic relationship between sin, "I" and the Law. Even though sin has an existence apart from Law, it is through the Law that its works gain force, doing harm to the "I" and ultimately bringing about his spiritual death<sup>(16)</sup>. Consequently the Law not only increases the possibilities of sin, but represents the condition through which sin itself becomes ineluctably effective in the "I" experience. It might be argued that the ultimate responsibility for these events lies with sin itself which, personified as an active subject, kills the "I" and uses the Law as its instrument to accomplish this. Indeed, it must be allowed that the commandment appears here in instrumental propositions<sup>(17)</sup>. However, the dramatic role assumed by the Law and its commandment — even a necessary role, according to v. 9 — cannot be denied. Furthermore, v. 11 associates the work of sin and the instrumental role of the commandment in such a strict way that the reader is compelled to consider the two works together. It seems, then, that if it is true that sin itself is ultimately responsible for its own flourishing, this fact does not deny the responsibility of the Law on another level.

These statements do indeed raise many problems: how is this instrumental role of the commandment possible, and when does it take place? How is it possible that sin without the Law is dead, if Rom 5,12 states that it came into the world as an operative entity through Adam's transgression? And if vv. 8b-10a are taken literally, is it not true that sin should have exercised its power only on Mosaic humanity? But this is an

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corresponds merely "to life". On pp. 115-116 of my book I extensively defended the view presented in this paper! Moreover, PITTA, *Romani*, 272, n. 279, pretends that I gave "al verbo 'rivivere', riferito al peccato, un senso debole", but this would be impossible according to his previous note! Be that as it may, I have explicitly stated that the verb ἀνέζησεν denotes "lo scatenarsi operativo del peccato, il suo divenire nella realtà" (ROMANELLO, *Una legge*, 116). What kind of "weak sense" would this be?

<sup>(16)</sup> Pace SCHREINER, *Romans*, 361-362, it is not stated here that sin, with the coming of the law, became transgression, but that sin "sprang to life", that is: became forcefully operative.

<sup>(17)</sup> To the personification of sin must be also ascribed the absence of the semantic field of the transgression (παράβασις etc.). The argumentation highlights not any single sinful act, but sin considered as a personified power. It remains nevertheless true that, according to vv. 7.18-23.25, the requirements of the Law are not accomplished by the ἐγώ.

absurd eventuality, contradicted not only by common sense, but explicitly by Paul himself in Rom 5,12-14. For these reasons it becomes tempting to qualify the value of these assertions in some way. The most obvious way to do this is to affirm a kind of cognitive, not causative, function of the Law with regard to the self-revelation of sin<sup>(18)</sup>. But in this chapter it is precisely through the Law that sin becomes operative, while the subject becomes conscious of the power of sin through his experience of it. So the Law is primarily involved in the process of the self-revelation of sin, not in the subject's attainment of self-awareness. This conclusion may well be implicit, but it is only a consequence which the argumentation does not invite the reader to dwell upon. Furthermore, it is stated that it is only through the commandment that sin kills the subject. How is it possible to detect a cognitive function in such an utterance? So although a number of questions remain unresolved at the moment, a first step for the interpretation of the chapter is to assume that these verses have stated the causative function of the Law. Clearly, this cannot be squared with the starting disclaimer of the Law.

### III. The development of the argumentation in vv. 14-25; some remarks

V. 13 functions as a turning point between the first part and second part of the pericope. The question with which the verse begins in itself arouses new interest in the reader. However, rather than stating anything really new with respect to what has been said, it seems simply to restate the basic problem mentioned in v. 7a. Interpreters usually assume that here Paul is asking whether the Law has become the cause of the subject's death, and rules out this possibility by ascribing the full responsibility of the killing process to sin<sup>(19)</sup>. This view seems to me rather unconvincing. In the previous verses sin has already borne the ultimate responsibility for the subject's death, so that interpretation would render the present question redundant. Furthermore, the answer in v. 13 does not add clarifications on the responsibility of sin which have not already been provided in vv. 7-12. New ideas could perhaps be detected if the two final clauses are read as expression of a divine

<sup>(18)</sup> T.E. VAN SPANJE, *Inconsistency in Paul? A Critique of the Work of Heikki Räisänen* (WUNT/2 110; Tübingen 1999) 225 claims that "law teaches what sin is".

<sup>(19)</sup> See, for example, DÍAZ-RODELAS, *Pablo y la ley*, 163-164, MOO, *Romans*, 452, PITTA, *Romani*, 274-275, SCHREINER, *Romans*, 372.

purpose, with God as an implied agent of it. In this case the death of the “I” could be ascribed to God himself, as a provisional step in his process of salvation. However, this view is not admitted by grammatical and rhetorical considerations. Indeed, the second ἵνα-clause makes use of the verb γένηται that, being deponent, does not accept the idea of an agent. But the overall decisive factor is God’s absence in the process here described, so the reader has no grounds for detecting God’s involvement in it<sup>(20)</sup>. That is why I regard the two ἵνα-clauses as consecutive, the verb φανῇ having the active sense of “to appear, to show itself”, and sin to be solely responsible for revealing its own reality. If all these affirmations simply repeat the foregoing ones, one could find something new in this verse by observing that, with respect to v. 7a, the question in v. 13 adds the words ἐμοὶ ἐγένετο. This means that the question seems to introduce, in a very discrete way, fresh attention to the situation of the “I” in relation to the Law. To put it in another way, the question seems to introduce an anthropological development which is nevertheless not independent from previous discussions on the Law. It aims to clarify the complex relations between the Law and the subject: what has become of the good Law in the reality of the life of the subject? What is the subject’s situation as a result of his encounter with the Law? To sum up my view of this verse: on the one hand the verse restates previous assertions on the killing activity of sin with regard to the subject and the instrumental role of the Law in this process, though it is not ultimately responsible for it. On the other hand it draws attention to the resulting situation of the subject involved in this relationship with the Law (and, obviously, with sin). This new development begins in v. 14, which affirms the spiritual nature of the Law and its opposite, the fleshly nature of the subject. For these reasons v. 13 has to be considered as a turning point.

From v. 15 onwards the pericope develops the logical consequences of the statement in v. 14, depicting the situation of the subject in an extended way, repeating similar, if not identical, affirmations (rhetorical *commoratio*). On one hand the “I” agrees willingly with the Law, but at the same time he is unable to accomplish what the Law requires. We are here in touch with a human experience well known from ancient times, one that became a literary *topos* in classical literature, namely ἀκράσια. It is above all the figure of Medea who,

<sup>(20)</sup> See also DÍAZ-RODELAS, *Pablo y la ley*, 166, ROMANELLO, *Una legge*, 127-128.

starting from the homonymous tragedy by Euripides, plays out the inner conflict arising from this experience<sup>(21)</sup>. Adopting this *topos*, Paul expresses it with two of his own peculiarities. First of all, he attributes the experience of ἀκράσια to a subject taught by Mosaic Law on what is right. In such a way the Law could be called good, as it performs a role of moral informer, but it turns out to be far too feeble to help the subject to perform its requirements. The Law, then, remains extraneous to the “I”; its spiritual nature does not really affect his fleshly behaviour. Secondly, the restatement that sin is the ultimate case of this state of things is due to Paul’s own perspective. Thus, while the antithesis between the subject’s willing and doing (vv. 15.19) has definite parallels in ancient classical literature, it is used by Paul within his own reference to Mosaic Law. Furthermore, the antithesis between sin and “I” (vv. 17.20) is peculiar to Paul.

This piece of argumentation depicts an experience which in itself is not so difficult to understand. According to some scholars, however, problems arise if the function of the Law regarding sin as stated here is compared with the one stated in the previous verses. Whereas in the previous verses sin becomes active only with the coming of the Law, in these verses sin is active independently of the Law. Sin constrains the subject to slavery (v. 14c) or it dwells within him (vv. 17.20) without considering the Law. It only remains powerless to help the subject to do what he should do according to the Law itself. But, after having formerly affirmed that sin works through the Law, it would have been a contradiction to affirm that it does not work by means of it<sup>(22)</sup>; we shall discuss this problem below.

The opening syntagm (εὐρίσκω ἄρα) of v. 21 shows that here the experiential balance of what has been stated hitherto is presented. The reappearance of the word νόμος and its frequent employment in the following verses, together with the recollection of the experience of death (v. 24), not mentioned after v. 11, are literary factors suggesting that from v. 21 begins the recapitulation of the chapter, a feature of the *peroratio*. This is not to say that νόμος always denotes the Mosaic Law. Surely, as it has already been qualified as spiritual (v. 14), it comes as no surprise to read here its qualification as divine in vv. 22.25. However, I disagree with Dunn, according to whom “the law of sin which is in

<sup>(21)</sup> The point is well documented by G. THEISSEN, *Psychologische Aspekte paulinischer Theologie* (FRLANT 131; Göttingen 1983) 213-222.

<sup>(22)</sup> See E.P. SANDERS, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia 1983) 74-81, RÄISÄNEN, *Paul*, 142-143

my constituent parts' ...can hardly be other than the Law used by sin to bring about death" <sup>(23)</sup>. In my opinion, not only does the adjective ἕτερος in v. 23 imply the reference to a law of "different kind" to the divine one, it is above all the rhetorical development of the chapter which makes it clear that, even if it is caught up in overwhelming sin, the Law cannot be identified with it. The phrase νόμος τῆς ἁμαρτίας, then, does not suit a reality that is distinct from sin. To state that "the Law is used by sin" is not the same as stating that "the Law is the Law of sin". Consequently, in the phrases where a νόμος wages victorious war against the divine Law one has to recognise a play on words (rhetorical *antanaclasis*), in which νόμος stands for "principle, rule" (of sin). As a summary of vv. 21-23 one could state that Mosaic Law proves unable to help the "I" to escape from the slavery into which sin has led him.

The sorrowful cry at v. 24 draws the reader's attention to the subject's situation. However, this anthropological remark functions as a depiction of the situation of the very subject who devoted himself to Mosaic Law. His existential contradiction is a result of the incapacity of the Law to rescue him. His situation is summarised in a concise way in v. 25b (rhetorical *epiphonema*): even though he serves God's Law in his own mind, in his concrete behaviour he is nothing but a slave of sin. His mental "service" is only wishful thinking. Between these two statements v. 25a presents an unexpected thanksgiving to God, hitherto absent in this chapter. This phrase, naming Jesus Christ as our Lord, is expressed in a terminology which is recurrent in chapters 5-8 of the letter, closing many pericopes (see 5,11.21; 6,23; 8,39), and could well function also here as part of the end of this chapter. At the same time, it also anticipates the affirmations stated in Rom 8,1ff. This kind of anticlimatic end can be interpreted as a rhetorical *hysteron proteron*. In other words, Paul first anticipates the argumentation which he is going to start in Rom 8,1 (v. 25a), and then sums up the present one (v. 25b).

The description of the dramatic condition of the subject cannot be read while ignoring the cumulative rhetoric effect implied in it (rhetorical *hypotyposis*). As a consequence, the reader cannot but consider himself as taking part in the vicissitudes of the "I" <sup>(24)</sup>. This

<sup>(23)</sup> J.D.G. DUNN, *Romans* (WBC 38A; Dallas 1988) I, 409.

<sup>(24)</sup> Assuming that the "I" is not a Christian subject, J.-N. ALETTI, "Rm 7.7-25 encore une fois: enjeux et propositions", *NTS* 48 (2002) 358-376 (here p. 374), effectively asserts, "La *prosopopée* a donc aussi pour fonction de montrer la solidarité du chrétien avec une humanité dont il connaît les tourments et dont il ne peut ni ne veut se désolidariser".

description thus raises the emotional involvement of the reader in these events. Here I am surely at one with some recent scholars<sup>(25)</sup> who underline this rhetorical feature of Rom 7,7-25. Unlike them, however, I do not suppose this is sufficient reason to read into the text any degree of Pauline experience reported or reflected on. The *pathos* presented on this page raises the reader's involvement, and does not imply the self-involvement of the author. For these reasons I hold that in vv. 14-25 the pronoun ἐγώ can be interpreted according the rhetorical device of personification. It does not allude to a Christian experience, but is simply a generic personification of somebody's confrontation with Mosaic Law<sup>(26)</sup>.

#### IV. The coherence of Paul's evaluation the Law: the argumentation through *concessio*

If one does not wish to offer a one-sided interpretation of the pericope, the presence of different evaluations of the Law must be acknowledged. When the nature of the Law is at stake it is always qualified in positive terms: it is not sin, it is holy, good, spiritual and, ultimately, divine. But when its actual work in a history marked by the lordship of sin is considered, then the pericope criticises the Law in the strongest terms. Naming this pericope an "apology for the Law" is therefore highly questionable, because it does not take into account the statements about the impotence of the Law. Of the interpreters who defend this thesis, I shall discuss only some observations proposed by one of the most influential, J.D.J. Dunn. Explaining Paul's statements in v. 8ff, he asserts that "the real culprit is sin as a power"<sup>(27)</sup>. But, as stated above, the recognition of the ultimate responsibility of sin in its own growth does not prevent one from observing the instrumentality of the Law, explicitly stated in vv. 8-14. Nor am I persuaded that the qualification of the Law as spiritual indicates that "there is some overlap between the two epochs" or that "the 'I' already identified with Christ in his death" becomes obedient "to the Law of faith, that is, to

<sup>(25)</sup> See DODD, *Paradigmatic "I"*, 221-234, G.S. HOLLAND, "The Self Against the Self in Romans 7.7-25", *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture. Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference* (ed. S.L. PORTER – D.L. STAMPS) (JSNTSS 180; Sheffield 1999), 260-271.

<sup>(26)</sup> For a detailed treatment of the subject see ROMANELLO, *Una legge*, 175-199.

<sup>(27)</sup> DUNN, *Romans*, II, 400.

the Law as spiritual”<sup>(28)</sup>. These evaluations have to assume that the “I” is Christian, but this seems untenable to me, as argued above. Furthermore, it must be added that Paul does not explicitly assert that the Law is subject to a kind of “Christian redemption”, either in this pericope or elsewhere. In fact, he never states that Christ led the Law back to its original spiritual meaning. Finally, one has also to acknowledge that the *pathos* carried by the depiction of the pitiful state of slavery of the “I”, emphasized mostly by the *peroratio*, points to the inability of the Law to rescue the subject who entrusts himself to it. The climax of the argumentation, then, appears to be the powerless character of the Law, not its good nature.

Nevertheless, this underlining of the inability of the Law stands alongside the assertion of its different nature. What is the reason for this juxtaposition? To be sure, this chapter offers a tragic and dramatic depiction of the meeting of a subject with divine Law and powerful sin<sup>(29)</sup>. But since in these events Mosaic Law reveals both its positive nature and its powerless character, is there any way to consider these two contrasting propositions in a coherent system of meaning? Simply stated: do Paul’s evaluations on the Law show only a dramatic tension, in which different statements are simply made, or is there any consistency between them?

In my opinion, the very fact that the argumentation in vv. 7b-8a is not included under the denial of the equalisation between Law and sin in v. 7a shows that this denial, even though it is not rebutted, is not the main thrust of the pericope. From a rhetorical point of view, the argumentative strategy that affirms something and subsequently underlines something else, resulting in a more weighty argument, can be called *concessio*<sup>(30)</sup>. It recognises that some ideas of an interlocutor (no matter if he is real or fictional) are true, but are diminished by some other affirmations which outweigh them. The weight of the *concessio* can be appreciated above all in verses where paraphrases can be expressed. V.14 is an example: “we know that the Law is spiritual; notwithstanding this fact, it must be stated that I am fleshly (so that I cannot accomplish the spiritual demands of the Law)”; or vv. 22-23: “I rejoice in the Law of God according to the inner man, notwithstanding this fact, there is another law in my members, that prevents the Law of

<sup>(28)</sup> DUNN, *Romans*, II, 405.407.

<sup>(29)</sup> See PITTA, *Romani*, 266-284.

<sup>(30)</sup> See ROMANELLO, *Una legge*, 207-219.

God to be effective in my members, which are instead governed by the law of sin". But the whole of the argument, juxtaposing consideration of the powerless character of the Law with statements on its nature, pivots upon *concessio*. Thus, Paul recognises the good nature of the Law, but at the same time underlines its powerlessness.

Scholars are now paying increasing attention to the presence of divergent evaluations of the Law. To quote only one recent one, T.L. Carter: "Romans 7,7-25 consists of an exposition of the ineffective struggle of the Jew under the Law against the power of sin (...) in light of this, Paul's conclusion that the commandment is holy and just and good may well seem surprising" <sup>(31)</sup>. He justifies this conclusion with a kind of extra-argumentative consideration, as a Pauline act of care for the weak faction in the Roman community. More generally, Carter assumes that Paul is redefining the boundaries of the Christian community that cannot base itself on the Law since it is ineffective in counteracting sin <sup>(32)</sup>. It is important to note here that Carter recognises a kind of *concessio* in the Pauline argument (even though he does not call it by that name) required for the benefit of the weaker members of the community. They are not explicitly named in this Pauline chapter, but their influence, as is Paul's overall rhetorical strategy, is assumed on the basis of a sociological interpretation of the data as they transpire from his letters. It goes beyond the aim of the present paper to go into the details of this kind of methodology, but it seems to me wise to investigate first of all whether there is any inherent reason for the *concessio* in the text itself, in the development of its thought. Here we must bear in mind the statements in vv. 5-6, which are shocking from a Jewish point of view. They need to be clarified. Does Paul perhaps assume that the Law is sinful in itself? He surely needs to reject this possibility, but his answer cannot consist of a simple denial: if the Law is not such, how is it possible to justify and support the strong statements that associate the Law with sin? From these premises, it follows that the emphasis on the powerful work of sin in Rom 7,7-25 serves not only to exculpate the Law. It also serves to explain how the

<sup>(31)</sup> T.L. CARTER, *Paul and the Power of Sin*. Redefining "Beyond the Pale" (SNTSMS 115; Cambridge 2002) 184.187.

<sup>(32)</sup> CARTER, *Paul*, XI.193. Carter's work develops theses and methodologies already proposed by F. WATSON, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*. A Sociological Approach (SNTSMS 56; Cambridge 1986), who also considers Rom 7,7-25 addressed to Jewish-Christians in order to emphasise the powerless character of the Law.



mutual relationship between the two entities is possible. This happens because the Law is powerless with relation to sin when it is personified as a power. It does not take too much imagination to suppose that, in this regard, Paul was the target of strong criticism by Judaizers in the Christian community. However, one has to admit that the questions in vv. 7.13 do not carry any particular objection by any specific part of the Pauline (or Roman) communities. Paul here deals with a strongly debated topic, but the questions in his argument arise from the statements laid down by Paul himself in his letter, which is why I affirm that it does not matter whether the interlocutor formulating the objection is real or fictional.

If I am right in interpreting this argument as *concessio*, in which the main thrust is to reaffirm the impotence of the Law, then the different depictions of the relationship between Law and sin, in vv. 7-13 and 14-25 respectively, cease to be a problem. It is true that in the first part of the chapter a direct instrumentality of the Law in the prevalence of sin is stated, while from v. 14 onwards sin is an active subject quite apart from the Law, merely remaining ineffective in counteracting it. But these different statements may be reconciled when regarded as different examples pointing to the same reality: the powerless character of the Law with respect to sin. If this is the main thrust of the argumentation, then it may well be depicted by means of one case in which the Law itself serves as a direct weapon in the hand of sin personified, and through another case in which it simply proves to be too feeble to face this inauspicious actor at this stage of human history. In each case the Law is powerless, absolutely and dramatically powerless, which is the factor underlined by this pericope.

According to this interpretation, *concessio* does not take the form of a simplistic argument in which a one-sided evaluation is offered and other factors are ignored. On the contrary, the main affirmation intended by an author is presented in the presence of other, dissonant, elements. These elements are recognised in such a way so as not to overshadow what needs to remain focused as central in the thought of the author. More precisely, with what is considered the most important concept the *concessio* incorporates what may have constituted an objection to it, so as to render the objection implausible. *Concessio* should not therefore be regarded as a simplistic form of argumentation, since it is a complex method of keeping different and possibly conflicting statements together. This kind of procedure is appropriate when one confronts the contrasting ideas of any interlocutor; *concessio*

allows the interlocutor's reasons to be diminished, without negating them<sup>(33)</sup>.

What is the origin in Paul of the necessity to restate this soteriological impossibility of the Law? The simplest answer, one that has become popular after Sanders' studies, is: because salvation is granted by God through His Son. We are delivered from sin and death in Christ Jesus (Rom 8,2), and this very fact excludes any other possible soteriological principle. In this regard, we need to consider the antithetical parallelism between Rom 7,7-25 and Rom 8,1-17, a chapter where the believer's life is depicted in utterly different terms from the life of the ἐγώ in the previous chapter. It is not without significance that Rom 8,3a recalls τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου. Through the involvement of His Son in a history marked by the lordship of sin, God achieved what the Law could not. Specifically, Rom 7,7-25 states three things that the Law cannot do: the most essential one is its inability to deliver the "I" from his slavery under sin (vv. 14,24). This engenders the Law's incapacity to help the subject accomplish what the Law itself requires, to obey its command (vv. 7-8.15-25). Finally, it proves to be a tool in a process that leads the "I" to death, and for this reason is not able to promote his life (v. 10b). By contrast, however, from Rom 8,1 onwards this situation appears to be ended for believers. Indeed, they are delivered from sin and death (vv. 2-3). Secondly, they are governed by the Spirit of Christ, who promotes in them a frame of mind that becomes effective in their lives (vv. 5-6.12-13) and brings them to accomplish the just requirement of the Law (v. 4). Thus are they led to true and eternal life (vv. 6.10-11).

<sup>(33)</sup> For these reasons, I disagree with PITTA, *Romani*, 152, according to whom the *concessio* "è un modo troppo sbrigativo per affrontare la questione estremamente conflittuale della Legge nel pensiero paolino". The *concessio* is precisely an argumentative strategy for expressing conflicting ideas. Moreover, one should not ask whether the "funzione di una concessione retorica" is to deny every possible positive qualification of the Law or to state also a part of the truth in the ideas of the interlocutor. I have already explicitly stated that "l'affermazione della bontà della legge non viene in realtà smentita. In fondo, la *concessio* non nega determinate affermazioni, piuttosto le relativizza" (see ROMANELLO, *Una legge*, 210). Finally, it is quite surprising, after this premise, that PITTA, *Romani*, 548, nevertheless recognises the possibility of the *concessio*. But, since according to him the *concessio* does not regard "la Legge in quanto tale, bensì le sue relazioni con il conflitto dell'io", this interpretation does not seem very clear to me. In fact, it is essential to recognise that although the Law as such is always qualified in positive terms, it proves to be powerless to counter sin. The rhetorical development of the argumentation points to this powerless work.

Is this too optimistic a view of Christian life? It seems to me essential to remember that the Christian's freedom appears in these chapters as an absolute gift, which the "I" by himself is unable to obtain. Furthermore, when Paul recalls the fleshly conduct of life (vv. 4b-8;12-13), he makes it clear that ἁμαρτία and σάρξ are powers still operative in history. Consequently, believers must seriously consider that it is still possible to relapse into that conduct of life. In this way they are urged to take responsibility for the gift granted them, not considering their status in an enthusiastic and unreal way. Finally, the argumentation from v. 18 onwards depicts their life in other tones, recalling their experience of sufferings and their salvation as yet unaccomplished (see also v. 11), so an unreal optimism is ruled out by all these factors. Nevertheless, it is true that in Rom 8,1-17 Paul clearly expresses the effectiveness of the believer's status. Compared with the condition of the "I" as a slave of sin, the believer's life is now something basically new, in which what was formerly impossible is now achieved.

More precisely, in Rom 8,1-17 we come across several so-called "participationist categories", expressing the believer's union with Christ and his participation in the life of the Spirit. Indeed, we read that believers are "in Christ" (v. 1) and, in the meantime, that Christ is "in them" (v. 10a). Furthermore, that they are led by the Spirit (vv. 4b.13-14), and that their life is according to the Spirit (vv. 5.9a), but also that the Spirit itself dwells in the believers (vv. 9b.11). At first glance such language may seem confusing: who is in whom? If these statements are seen from a metaphorical standpoint, they prove to be different images depicting the same reality. This reality consists of the mutual relationship between believers and Christ with His Spirit. This relationship is a present one, by means of which the Risen Christ raises his own frame of mind in believers. In this way, through His Spirit's gift, He becomes the living sphere of their experience and the conduct of their lives. At this point it should be noted that this metaphorical language is analogous to that used in Rom 7,7-25, where the ἁμαρτία is depicted both as a master external to the ἐγώ (v. 14), and as a subject who dwells in the ἐγώ (vv. 17.20.23). In these chapters, in fact, two antagonistic and mutually exclusive lordships are compared: the one of sin, the other of Christ and His Spirit. Their results for the individual are opposite: death in the former case (Rom 7,9-10.24; 8,6a.13a), life in the latter (Rom 8,2.6b.11.13b).

So, where does the criticism of the Law originate in Paul? It

follows that the Law appears in a position neither to effect a change of lordship, nor to promote a living sphere for people's existence. In my judgement, the antithetical comparison between these two chapters shows that since salvation is granted by Christ, the Law should not be regarded as a soteriological principle. More important than this, however, the Law cannot be regarded as a means of salvation because it is powerless. This is to say that in comparing life under sin and life in Christ Paul has also pointed out the inherent weakness of the Law. For this reason, life "in Christ" proves not to be a life under another Law, a rather different kind of "covenantal nomism". Life "in Christ", instead, is something basically new compared to life under the Law, as Christ himself promotes his life in believers. They are only urged to manifest what they are, to be led by the Spirit dwelling in them (Rom 8,13-14), not to strive in order to perform something external to their lives<sup>(34)</sup>.

From these considerations, it may be concluded that the inherent limit of the Law consists of its inability to deal with sin. There is no doubt that this is a real and serious problem for Paul. His soteriology, nevertheless, is not limited to this aspect. Later in chap. 8 Paul states clearly that the Spirit we received is a Spirit promoting in us an attitude towards God peculiar to sons (vv. 14-16). This is expressed mostly in our cry to God, in which we call Him "Father"<sup>(35)</sup>. Thus, even if υιοθεσία means literally "act of adoption", the pericope focuses not on it alone, but also on the status arising from this act. For this reason, υιοθεσία should be understood and rendered as "adoptive sonship". This proves to be the most encompassing term expressing the identity of Christ's disciples. The believers' union with Christ is so effective that not only does it promote in them a proper conduct of life, but above all it elevates them to the same status as the Son. The Spirit, who promotes in believers a life opposite to the one according to the flesh,

<sup>(34)</sup> See also C. TALBERT, "Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionist", *CBQ* 63 (2001) 1-22, esp. 17, and before him T. LAATO, *Paulus und das Judentum. Anthropologische Erwägungen* (Åbo 1991) 161-167. However, I do not agree with all of Talbert's criticisms of Sanders' studies. In my opinion, Sanders' "comparison of patterns of religion" between Jewish books and Pauline letters has attained deep insights for scholarly debate. The problem is that Pauline theology cannot be evaluated only by means of a "pattern of religion", as I hope to have shown in this paper.

<sup>(35)</sup> The cry in Rom 8,15 can perhaps be related to the anguished cry in Rom 7,24. In such a way these verses constitute the last element of the comparison between the two chapters.

is the Spirit of Christ (v. 9c). For this reason, His work raises in believers the wholeness of Christ's attitude towards God: not only the obedience in His conduct of life, but also the identity which this obedience brings out, the identity of a son. Now, to be associated to Christ's status is not a requirement to counteract sin and its lordship. It is an absolutely free gift, through which God expresses His will to enter into communion with human beings. He creates a possibility of reciprocity between Him and us, He considers us as sons and loves us as sons. In the dimension of adoptive sonship the "participationist categories" reach their fullness. We not only participate in Christ's life, but in His very identity.

It is not reasonable to expect the Law to promote this new identity in believers. That is why emphasis on the inability of the Law should not be regarded as deprecation of the same. One belittles a thing when it turns out to be unable to achieve what it should achieve. In my judgement, this would be appropriate if the Law involved legalism, the reliance on our own performance in relation to God. In this case, man's activity would be deflected from the intended goal of the Law itself, which is obedience to God. But whoever asserts that Pauline theology stands against the risk of legalism<sup>(36)</sup> should explain how this reading is justified in the Pauline writings. Paul never explicitly asserts this fact — certainly not in Rom 7,7-25, as we have had occasion to argue. Instead, the comparison between the ineffectiveness of the Law and the work of Christ and His Spirit stresses the newness of the believer's life. This newness does not involve a deprecation of the Law; it simply clarifies that the work of the Law must be regarded on other levels. As Paul recognises the good nature of the Law, even as *concessio*, it is probable (as I am convinced) that he would also recognise some good characteristics in what the Law operates or requires. But Paul does not develop this thought in Rom 7,7-25: it would go beyond the aim of this paper to explore it here.

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In this study I hope to have shown, both from the internal analysis of the pericope and from its comparison with the following one, that the point of Rom 7,7-25 is the incapacity of the Law. The positive

<sup>(36)</sup> See PITTA, *Romani*, 548, although he distinguishes between Law and legalism.

character of the Law is conceded — that is, not denied — but diminished. In the meantime, the comparison between the two pericopes leads to the recognition of the utterly new basis on which our relation with God becomes possible. This one is granted to us through our participation in Christ's own status, the status of a son. This participation brings a mutual communion between us and God, a deep degree of personal involvement by the partners in the relationship. Obviously, this relationship is made possible only by the gracious decision of God himself who, in order to achieve this aim, sent His Son. It is an act of absolute grace. It goes far beyond the scope of the Law to make this kind of relationship possible. For this reason, emphasis on the incapacity of the Law must not be considered as an act of contempt for it. Instead, it clarifies the objective reasons why the Law cannot be regarded as a soteriological principle.

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#### SUMMARY

By means of a literary-rhetorical analysis, it can be stated that Rom 7,7-25 forms a literary unit, depending upon the *propositio* of Rom 7,7a. In fact, the question on the possible equalization between Mosaic Law and sin raises a new discussion, carried out precisely in Rom 7,7-25. The *climax* of the pericope appears to be the powerless character of the Law with respect to sin, depicted through two different examples. In the first one, in vv. 7-13, it is not stated that through the Law sin become known by the "I", but that through the Law sin gains force and becomes ineluctably effective. In the second one, in vv. 14-25, sin is an active subject quite apart from Law, that remains nevertheless ineffective in counteracting it. In any case, these two different depictions point both to the ineffectiveness of the Law. The affirmations on the positive nature of the Law are incorporated in this pericope in order to be diminished —even if not denied. This rhetorical strategy can be called *concessio*. In Rom 8,1-17 the believer's life is depicted in different terms from the life of the "I" of Rom 7,7-25. This comparison leads to the recognition of the new basis on which our relation with God becomes possible. In the meantime, it clarifies that the Law cannot promote this new identity in believers. For this reason, emphasis on the incapacity of the Law must not be considered as an act of contempt for it. Instead, it clarifies the objective reasons why the Law cannot be regarded as a soteriological principle.

## **What the OT Prophets Did Not Know: The Mystery of the Church in Eph 3,2-13**

Ephesians 3,2-13 stands at the heart of many discussions that continue to engage the church. For questions regarding the degree of continuity and discontinuity between the Testaments, the relationship between the church and Israel, as well as the authorship of the letter to the Ephesians, this passage is crucial. The purpose of this essay is two-fold. First, it will be argued that the inclusion of the Gentiles is referred to as a previously unrevealed mystery because it is based upon the abrogation of the Mosaic law and entails a degree of nearness to the Lord that exceeds the expectations of the old covenant. Second, we will address the question of authorship. Assuming Pauline authorship as a working hypothesis, we will show that the use of the concept of mystery in Eph 3 is intimately linked with Paul's terminology and thought world attested in the undisputed letters. It is unwarranted, therefore, to find proof of a post-Pauline development in the use of the term "mystery" in Ephesians<sup>(1)</sup>.

After examining the content and nature of the mystery in the immediate context in Eph 3,1-13, we will look at how this "mystery" passage fits into the larger context of Ephesians. This further prompts an investigation of Paul's role as recipient of the revelation of the mystery. Another subsection of the paper is devoted to the relationship between the concept of the mystery and the abrogation of the Mosaic law. Questions regarding the alleged post-Pauline nature of Ephesians will be dealt with throughout this article, where they are prompted by the subject matter. The final section will be devoted to an evaluation of the claim that the "mystery" terminology in Ephesians betrays an author other than the apostle Paul.

### ***1. The Definition of the Mystery***

Having elaborated on the revelation of the mystery in vv. 3-5, Paul gives the definition of the mystery in v. 6: "the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in

<sup>(1)</sup> W. Kümmel concludes that the different theology in Ephesians over against the undisputed letters makes it impossible that the letter could have been written by Paul. His chief evidence is the use of the term "mystery" (*Introduction to the New Testament* [Nashville 1975] 360).

Christ Jesus through the gospel". The emphasis in the three terms is on the common prefix  $\sigma\upsilon\nu$ -<sup>(2)</sup>. The Gentiles enjoy these privileges together with the Jews. "Fellow heirs" refers to the status of being partakers in the eschatological heritage. The Old Testament background is to have a share ( $\text{נַחֲלָה}$ ) in the holy land. To belong to the same body means to be members of the church, for which "body" has become a technical term. As partakers in the promise, the Gentiles are included in the promises to the seed of Abraham (Gen 12,2-3)<sup>(3)</sup>. This takes place in Jesus Christ through the gospel.

Many commentators have argued that the description of a new unity of Jews and Gentiles in Ephesians cannot have been written in the time of Paul but must reflect a later time in church history, a time when the question of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the church was no longer a hot issue<sup>(4)</sup>. This inference seems to be unduly

<sup>(2)</sup> E. BEST, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (ICC; Edinburgh 1998) 312; J.-N. ALETTI, *Saint Paul Épître aux Éphésiens* (EB 42; Paris 2001) 180.

<sup>(3)</sup> H. MERKLEIN, *Das kirchliche Amt nach dem Epheserbrief* (SANT 33; Munich 1973) 205-207; H.W. HOEHNER, *Ephesians. An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids 2002) 447. It has been suggested that the promise refers to the substance of the promise, that is, the Holy Spirit (M. BARTH, *Ephesians 1-3* [AB 34; New York 1974] 338; P.T. O'BRIEN, *The Letter to the Ephesians* [Pillar New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids 1999] 235). In line with the reference to the heritage, however, which points back to the promise given to Abraham (Gen 17,7), and with the use of the same word in 2,12, where it has to do with the covenants, it is better to understand this as the Abrahamic promise.

<sup>(4)</sup> H. CONZELMANN, "Der Brief an die Epheser", *Die Briefe an die Galater, Epheser, Philipper, Kolosser, Thessalonicher und Philemon* (ed. J. BECKER – H. CONZELMANN – G. FRIEDRICH) (NTD 8; Göttingen 1976) 99; F. MUSSNER, *Der Brief an die Epheser* (ÖTK 10; Gütersloh 1982) 82; N.A. DAHL, *Studies in Ephesians. Introductory Questions, Text- & Edition-Critical Issues, Interpretation of Texts and Themes* (WUNT 2/131; Tübingen 2000) 54. Some scholars also see a difference over against the undisputed Paulines in the fact that Ephesians does not seem to wrestle with the unbelief of Israel, as Paul does in Rom 9–11. To the contrary, Israel seems to be an idealized entity (M. BARTH, *Israel and the Church. Contribution to a Dialogue Vital for Peace* [Richmond, VA 1969] 94; P. POKORNÝ, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Epheser* [THKNT 10/II; Leipzig 1992] 124; M.Y. MACDONALD, *Colossians and Ephesians* [SP 17; Collegeville, MN 2000], 242). Due attention should be given, however, to the fact that both Israel and the Gentiles are seen to be in need of salvation (A.T. LINCOLN, "The Church and Israel in Ephesians 2", *CBQ* 49 [1987] 613) and that Paul makes a reservation when he refers to Israel as the circumcision, adding that it was "made by hands" (v. 11). The purpose of Ephesians does not call for a discussion of these issues, but the letter shares the same basic understanding of Israel's situation as do the undisputed letters.



inspired by F. C. Baur's reconstruction of the early church, as determined by the conflict over law observance and the inclusion of the Gentiles. But this conflict did not characterize all the early churches. Recent investigations conclude that it is a fallacy to read this conflict into Paul's Corinthian correspondence, for example<sup>(5)</sup>.

## 2. *The Nature of the Mystery*

The New Testament use of the term "mystery" must be understood against its Jewish background, primarily the book of Daniel, where the Aramaic term  $\text{ܡܝܫܬܪܝܢ}$  is used for something that was kept secret and subsequently revealed (Dan 2,18-19.28-30.47; 4,6)<sup>(6)</sup>. More remotely related is the concept of revealed mysteries in Qumran (1QS 9.18-19; 11.3; CD 3.13-14; 1QpHab 7.5)<sup>(7)</sup>. By employing the term "mystery" Paul emphasizes that the Christ event is the fulfillment of something that is planned by God, something that was previously unknown, but now proclaimed.

This raises a question: what was previously unknown about the mystery in Eph 3,6? The fact that the Gentiles are included in the divine promise is nothing new (Gen 12,3; 18,18; Isa 2,2-4; 11,10; 42,6; 49,6; 66,20; Jer 3,17; Mic 4,1-3; Zech 2,15; 9,9-10) and Paul elsewhere stresses how the salvation of the Gentiles is in accordance with the promises of God in the Old Testament (Rom 4,16-17; Gal 3,22.29; 4,28). Some commentators therefore favor taking the  $\omega\varsigma$  in v. 5 as comparative, the sense being: "In previous generations this has not been made known to the sons of men to such an extent as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the

<sup>(5)</sup> J.L. SUMNEY, *Identifying Paul's Opponents*. The Question of Method in 2 Corinthians (JSNTSS 40; Sheffield 1990) 15-42, 177. The only passage in these letters that deals directly with the relationship between the old and the new covenant is 2 Cor 3. In this passage Paul argues that his ministry of the new covenant is essentially different from that of the old. But the very point that the new covenant is superior to the old is a presupposition for his argument, a presupposition about which there is no dispute (C. K. STOCKHAUSEN, *Moses' Veil and the Glory of the New Covenant* [AnBib 116; Rome 1989] 79, 114; M.E. THRALL, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [ICC; Edinburgh 1994] II, 240-241). Cf. also J. Sumney, who argues that there are no clear allusions to opponents in 2 Cor 3,7-18 (*Identifying Paul's Opponents*, 140-142).

<sup>(6)</sup> R.E. BROWN, *The Semitic Background of the Term 'Mystery' in the New Testament* (Philadelphia 1968) 7.

<sup>(7)</sup> BROWN, *The Semitic Background*, 22-28; M. BOCKMUEHL, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (Grand Rapids 1997) 42-48.

spirit”<sup>(8)</sup>. An absolute meaning of ὥς is to be preferred, however. The point is that the mystery that Paul has in mind has not been made known in previous generations, but now it is revealed<sup>(9)</sup>. The same temporal contrast is taken up again in vv. 9-10. Here it is made clear that in previous times (ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων) the mystery was hidden, but now it is made known<sup>(10)</sup>. This interpretation is further confirmed by the omission of the comparative ὥς in the parallel Col 1,26<sup>(11)</sup>. The question remains, therefore, in what sense could the inclusion of the Gentiles be described as a previously unknown mystery<sup>(12)</sup>?

### 3. The Wider Context

For clues regarding how to understand this mystery, we should examine Paul’s elaboration on the concept. The mystery is further described in what Paul has previously written about briefly (3,3b). Some commentators have suggested that this refers to his earlier letters or to a collection of Pauline letters but it is difficult to imagine that

<sup>(8)</sup> C.C. CARAGOUNIS, *The Ephesian Mysterion. Meaning and Content* (Lund 1977) 102-103; G.K. BEALE, *John’s Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* (JSNTSS 166; Sheffield 1998) 245.

<sup>(9)</sup> J. GNILKA, *Der Epheserbrief* (HTKNT; Freiburg 1971) 166; R. SCHNACKENBURG, *Ephesians. A Commentary* (Edinburgh 31991) 133; MERKLEIN, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 166; A.T. LINCOLN, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Dallas 1990) 177; ALETTI, *Éphésiens*, 178; HOEHNER, *Ephesians*, 439.

<sup>(10)</sup> C. REYNIER, *Évangile et mystère. Les enjeux théologiques de l’épître aux Éphésiens* (LD 149; Paris 1992) 143-145.

<sup>(11)</sup> H. SCHLIER, *Der Brief an die Epheser. Ein Kommentar* (Düsseldorf 31962) 150. Barth concurs but conjectures that the author of Ephesians, if he had been pressed, would have admitted that the mystery was known in the old covenant, but that revelation for him meant revelation in word and deed, and that the mystery had not been revealed, in this sense, until now (*Ephesians* 1-3, 334).

<sup>(12)</sup> F.-J. Steinmetz has attempted to interpret the ὦν in Eph 3,5 in an existential sense, that is, it has no temporal force, but refers to the new existence that becomes a reality whenever someone has an existential encounter with the gospel (*Protologische Heils-Zuversicht. Die Strukturen des soteriologischen und christologischen Denkens im Kolosser- und Epheserbrief* [FTS 2; Frankfurt am Main 1969] 57-58). H. Merklein correctly objects, however, that the terms “before” and “now” are not exclusively used with reference to the old and the new existence. In Eph 2,2 the prince of the power of the air is said to be at work “now”. Therefore, the temporal connotations cannot be excluded from the terms “before” and “now” in Ephesians (*Das kirchliche Amt*, 182). E. Best feels compelled to pass the judgment that the author of Ephesians “perhaps over-stresses” the discontinuity between the testaments (*Ephesians*, 306).

such a collection could be called “brief”<sup>(13)</sup>. It is more likely that he refers to what he has just written in the letter to the Ephesians<sup>(14)</sup>.

The concept of making the mystery known is introduced in Eph 1,9-10, where the mystery is defined as the summing up of all things in Christ, those in heaven and those on earth<sup>(15)</sup>. It is probably best to understand the mystery in ch. 3 as a specific aspect of this, namely the part which deals with the earthly things, which is described here as the bringing together of Jews and Gentiles in unity<sup>(16)</sup>. The referent of “as I have previously written to you briefly” must therefore primarily be 2,11-22 and only secondarily 1,9-10<sup>(17)</sup>.

The antithesis between the abysmal past of his audience and their glorious presence described in Eph 2,11-22 is well-known from Paul’s

<sup>(13)</sup> For references see LINCOLN, *Ephesians*, 175.

<sup>(14)</sup> J. Muddiman contends that it would be too late for Paul to point out that they would be able to understand this if he were referring to something they had already read (*The Epistle to the Ephesians* [BNTC; London 2001] 152). This objection is too pedantic, however (cf. 2 Cor 1,13).

<sup>(15)</sup> SCHLIER, *Epheser*, 62; GNILKA, *Epheserbrief*, 79; CARAGOUNIS, *The Ephesian Mysterion*, 95; LINCOLN, *Ephesians*, 30; SCHNACKENBURG, *Ephesians*, 59; BEST, *Ephesians*, 137; O’BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 111.

<sup>(16)</sup> STEINMETZ, *Protologische Heils-Zuversicht*, 106; BEST, *Ephesians*, 304; O’BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 228. Some commentators tend to equate the mystery of ch. 3 with that of 1,9-10. But that seems to infer too much from ch. 1 into ch. 3. The epexegetical genitive in 3,6 gives the primary referent for the term “mystery” in this context. In his attempt to maintain a unified referent for the term “mystery”, Barth defines the secret of 1,9-10 as the fact that God before the creation has included in himself a people and that his power over all powers ensures their salvation (*Ephesians 1–3*, 126). But that interpretation does not give due weight to the summing up of the things in the heavenlies. “The things in the heavenlies” is the object of the summing up together in 1,10 on a par with “the things on earth”. It is not subordinated to “the things on earth” so that it should only be brought in as an assurance that the summing up of all things on earth will actually take place. Nevertheless, the aspect of the mystery in 1,9-10 that deals with the heavenly things is not completely out of view in ch. 3, however, as we can see in v. 10. But the consequences with regard to the heavenly realm are not here described as the content of the mystery itself, but rather as the purpose or result of the revelation of the mystery. Correctly LINCOLN, *Ephesians*, 186-187; O’BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 244. Contra BARTH, *Ephesians 1–3*, 331; CARAGOUNIS, *The Ephesian Mysterion*, 108.

<sup>(17)</sup> Correctly SCHNACKENBURG, *Ephesians*, 132. Similarly, E. PERCY, *Die Probleme der Kolosser- und Epheserbriefe* (Lund 1946) 350; GNILKA, *Epheserbrief*, 164; CARAGOUNIS, *The Ephesian Mysterion*, 100; LINCOLN, *Ephesians*, 175; O’BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 229; HOEHNER, *Ephesians*, 428. Merklein and Mussner refer exclusively to 2,11-22 (MERKLEIN, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 216; MUSSNER, *Epheser*, 102). Reynier points out the literary parallels between 2,11-22 and 3,5-6 (*Évangile et mystère*, 168).

letters (Rom 6,17-18; 7,5-6; 11,30; 1 Cor 6,9-11)<sup>(18)</sup>. In this context, this temporal contrast is combined with a redemptive historical contrast between the time before and after Christ<sup>(19)</sup>. This combination of these two “before” and “now” schemas is anticipated in the letter to the Galatians. In his discussion on the purpose of the law, Paul refers to an earlier time in redemptive history (“before faith came”; 3,23) and to the new era that is inaugurated with the coming of Christ (“now that faith has come”; 3,25). In 4,6 Paul applies the consequences of this new era to his Galatian audience: they are God’s children, having received the Spirit of God. This newfound state is then again contrasted, not to an earlier stage in redemptive history, but to the earlier condition of his Gentile audience, when they did not know God and they were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods (4,8). This is the same perspective that Paul introduces in Eph 2. His audience was once without God (2,12), but they are now members of the household of God (2,19). This new status of the Gentiles, however, is also indicative of a new period in redemptive history. It is made possible through the work of Christ (2,14-16).

It is commonly observed that Eph 2,11-22 can be divided into three subsections. Vv. 11-13 describe the former situation of the Gentiles, vv. 14-18 describe the reconciliation in Christ, and vv. 19-22 serve as the positive counterpart to vv. 11-13, describing the new situation of the Gentiles<sup>(20)</sup>. Before, the Gentiles were excluded from God’s

<sup>(18)</sup> R. BULTMANN, *Theology of the New Testament* (London 1952) I, 106.

<sup>(19)</sup> Some scholars maintain that the antithesis in Ephesians is no longer primarily temporal, as in Paul’s letters, but spatial, between this world and the “powers” (CONZELMANN, “Epheser”, 88; J.P. SAMPLEY, “Ephesians”, *The Deutero-Pauline Letters: Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus* [Proclamation Commentaries; Minneapolis 1993] 3; cf. P. TACHAU, ‘Einst’ und ‘Jetzt’ im Neuen Testament. Beobachtungen zu einem urchristlichen Predigtschema in der neutestamentlichen Briefliteratur und zu seiner Vorgeschichte [FRLANT 105; Göttingen 1972] 135-141). The temporal contrast is actually more significant here, however, than in the comparable “mystery”-passage in 1 Cor 2. In 1 Cor 2 the mystery is not something that was hidden in the past, but something that is hidden now, only being received by the perfect (v. 6). Cf. M. WOLTER, “Verborgene Weisheit und Heil für die Heiden. Zur Traditionsgeschichte und Intention des ‘Revelationsschemas’”, *ZTK* 84 (1987) 300-301; S. GRINDHEIM, “Wisdom for the Perfect: Paul’s Challenge to the Corinthian Church (1 Corinthians 2:6-16)”, *JBL* 121 (2002) 698-699.

<sup>(20)</sup> BARTH, *Ephesians 1–3*, 275; LINCOLN, *Ephesians*, 125; SCHNACKENBURG, *Ephesians*, 105; BEST, *Ephesians*, 236; O’BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 183; ALETTI, *Éphésiens*, 136-137; HOEHNER, *Ephesians*, 351.

covenant people<sup>(21)</sup>. Their new status is described with imagery that underscores their newfound nearness to God, a nearness that is modeled upon, but yet exceeding that of Israel under the old covenant. V. 17 alludes to Isa 57,19 and 52,7<sup>(22)</sup>. In contrast to the original context, however, where the promises are given to Israel, here they are applied to the believers. Paul is identifying the Gentile believers with the re-created Israel<sup>(23)</sup>. In 2,19 the ξένοι καὶ πάροιχοι probably reflect the Hebrew terms גֵּר and תְּשׁוּבָה, which were used in the Old Testament for foreigners that stayed temporarily in Israel without becoming proselytes (Exod 12,45; Lev 25,45.47; Deut 14,21). As such they are apt terms to designate people that are excluded from the service of God. Now, however, the Gentile believers have become fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household. The access (προσᾱγωγή) now enjoyed by the Gentiles, as well as the Jews (v. 18), recalls the image of the priests and how they were granted access to present sacrifices to the Lord (Exod 29,10; Lev 1,3; 7,8; 2 Chr 29,31; 2 Mac 3,32)<sup>(24)</sup>. Now, the Gentiles can even be identified metaphorically with the temple (v. 21), another image that has connotations of the former separation. Access to the Jerusalem temple was denied to the Gentiles. Women were only allowed in the women's court and men were only allowed in the court of the Israelites. Priests alone could enter the sanctuary (Jos., *J.W.* 5.194, 199, 226)<sup>(25)</sup>. This symbol of gradual separation is now turned upside down in a way where the fulfillment of the prophecies transcends the expectations. The image of the new temple was a stock theme among the OT prophets. In some instances, the Gentiles were included among the

<sup>(21)</sup> R. SCHNACKENBURG, "Die Politeia Israels in Eph 2, 12", *De la Tôrah au Messie* (ed. M. CARREZ – J. DORÉ – P. GRELOT) (Paris 1981) 470; MUSSNER, *Epheser*, 71; N.A. DAHL, *Studies in Ephesians*, 441; BEST, *Ephesians*, 242; O'BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 189.

<sup>(22)</sup> P. STUHLMACHER, "'Er ist unser Friede' (Eph 2,14). Zur Exegese und Bedeutung von Eph 2,14–18", *Versöhnung, Gesetz und Gerechtigkeit. Aufsätze zur biblischen Theologie* (Göttingen 1981) 234; BEST, *Ephesians*, 270; MUDDIMAN, *Ephesians*, 137.

<sup>(23)</sup> BEALE, *John's Use*, 245; T. MORITZ, *A Profound Mystery. The Use of the Old Testament in Ephesians* (NTS 85; Leiden 1996) 49.

<sup>(24)</sup> K. L. SCHMIDT, "ᾠγωγή κτλ.", *TDNT* I, 131, 133; MUSSNER, *Epheser*, 86; M. GESE, *Das Vermächtnis des Apostels. Die Rezeption der paulinischen Theologie im Epheserbrief* (WUNT 2/99; Tübingen 1997) 198; MACDONALD, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 247.

<sup>(25)</sup> E.P. SANDERS, *Judaism. Practice and Belief 63 BCE – 66 CE* (Philadelphia 1994) 61-62.

worshippers at this temple (Isa 2,3; 56,6-7; 60,5-7; 66,19-21). But now the church is identified with the temple itself. Under the old covenant God dwelt among his people. Now, the community of believers is his dwelling<sup>(26)</sup>. While the re-creation of Israel is understood to have taken place in the church, the church stands out as an entity that transcends the old categories of “Gentile” and “Jew”<sup>(27)</sup>.

The idea of the church as the temple is also found in 1 Cor 3,16-17. In that passage, there seems to be a different perspective, however. Christ alone is the foundation of the building (3,11), not the apostles and the prophets (cf. Eph 2,20). The description in Ephesians is sometimes understood to reflect a later stage in church history, a time when the apostles were a phenomenon of the past<sup>(28)</sup>. The essential idea is the same, however: the unity of the ministers in the church. The differences are best explained as stemming from the different perspective of the two passages. In 1 Cor 3 the apostles are in view as preachers; in Eph 2–3 as recipients of revelation, an idea more readily lending itself to be described as a foundation<sup>(29)</sup>.

#### 4. *The Concept of Revelation*

This observation has led Helmut Merklein to conclude that “revelation” has become a more dogmatic concept in Ephesians as compared with Galatians. The emphasis is no longer on the historical act of revelation but on revelation as a norm of tradition<sup>(30)</sup>. Merklein is reading too much into the differences, however. Already in Galatians the revelation of the gospel is a norm by which even the angels and the apostle himself are to be judged (Gal 1,8-9).

In Eph 3,5 the revelation of the mystery is said to be given to “his holy apostles and prophets in the spirit”. The insertion of the personal

<sup>(26)</sup> R.J. MCKELVEY, *The New Temple. The Church in the New Testament* (OTM; Oxford 1969) 180.

<sup>(27)</sup> MERKLEIN, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 131; LINCOLN, “The Church”, 613, 616; ALETTI, *Éphésiens*, 180, 181. Hoehner overdoes the distinction when he dismisses the interpretation that the saints are made fellow citizens with Israel (*Ephesians*, 395-396). While it is true that the Gentiles are said to have joined the saints, not explicitly Israel, the imagery is unmistakably drawn from the OT descriptions of Israel.

<sup>(28)</sup> POKORNÝ, *Epheser*, 134-135; GESE, *Das Vermächtnis*, 200; MUDDIMAN, *Ephesians*, 154.

<sup>(29)</sup> This distinction appears to have been overlooked by A. van Roon (*The Authenticity of Ephesians* [NTS 39; Leiden 1974] 363).

<sup>(30)</sup> MERKLEIN, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 171-172, 176.

pronoun, αὐτοῦ, after “apostles” is an indication that Paul intends here a reference to two different groups, as the two terms clearly are being used to refer to different groups in Eph 4,11<sup>(31)</sup>. As one of the antitheses in v. 5 is between “previous generations” and “now”, the prophets in view must be the New Testament prophets.

Paul himself is given a special insight into the mystery (v. 4, cf. vv. 2.3.7.8). In typical Pauline fashion, the passage Eph 3,1-11 juxtaposes two kinds of status. Vv. 2-7 are marked off with an *inclusio* with “grace” (τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς δοθείσης μοι in v. 2, and τὴν δωρεὰν τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς δοθείσης μοι in v. 7)<sup>(32)</sup>. “Grace” here refers to the ministerial grace<sup>(33)</sup> and as such it is juxtaposed with Paul’s visible status. He is a prisoner (v. 1) and the least of the saints (v. 8). The same principle of revelation of the mystery is reflected here as in 1 Cor 2,6-16; God’s revelation turns the values of this world

<sup>(31)</sup> MERKLEIN, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 188; LINCOLN, *Ephesians*, 179; SCHNACKENBURG, *Ephesians*, 133; O’BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 233. Even though the Granville-Sharp rule cannot be applied here, as the two nouns are not in the singular, W.A. Grudem maintains that the description “apostles and prophets”, to whom the revelation of the mystery is given (Eph 3,5) and upon whom the church is built (Eph 2,20), is referring to one single group. “The prophets” is not a group distinct from the apostles, but another word used to describe them, the sense being: “the apostles who are also prophets”. Grudem quotes some instances where the article is only employed before the first of two plural nouns and where the two terms refer to the same group of people (Rom 16,7; Eph 4,11; Col 1,2). In Eph 3,5, however, the two terms, “prophets” and “apostles”, are separated by the insertion of the personal pronoun, αὐτοῦ, after “apostles”. A comparable instance is found in Rom 16,7, but there the personal pronoun, μου, is repeated after both the titles. Of all the evidence that Grudem has accumulated there is no real parallel, therefore, to Eph 3,5 that proves that it is possible to take the two terms as referring to the same group. Grudem’s interpretation is motivated by his understanding of New Testament prophecy as a non-authoritative and continuing spiritual gift. He finds that the foundational role ascribed to the apostles and prophets in Eph 3,5 and especially 2,20 is more appropriately taken to refer to the apostles alone (*The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* [Washington, D.C. 1982], 97-98; similarly, BEST, *Ephesians*, 307). Cf. also D.B. Wallace, who notes that when two nouns are linked in this way they most commonly refer to two distinct groups (“The Semantic Range of the Article-Noun-καί-Noun Plural Construction in the New Testament”, *GTJ* 4 [1983] 79, 82).

<sup>(32)</sup> REYNIER, *Évangile et mystère*, 49; BEST, *Ephesians*, 298; O’BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 226. Similarly, H.E. LONA, *Die Eschatologie im Kolosser- und Epheserbrief* (FB 48; Würzburg 1984) 280.

<sup>(33)</sup> MERKLEIN, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 175; SCHNACKENBURG, *Ephesians*, 131; GESE, *Das Vermächtnis*, 243. Similarly, BEST, *Ephesians*, 298.

upside-down<sup>(34)</sup>. The least of all has been given the most glorious ministry of all<sup>(35)</sup>. This reversal of values motif is a seal of genuine Pauline authorship (cf. Rom 4,18; 1 Cor 1,26-29; 3,18; 2 Cor 4,10-12; 6,8b-10; 12,9; 13,4; Phil 3,7). If Ephesians were post-Pauline it would be difficult to explain why the author would invoke Paul's authority simply to downplay it by leveling his special commission to the Gentiles with that of the other apostles and by exaggerating Paul's humility by identifying him as the least of the saints<sup>(36)</sup>. This question becomes all the more pressing when it is observed that the apostolic fathers did not speak of Paul in a way that stressed his humility and weakness, but rather his greatness and righteousness (Ign. *Eph.* 12.2; *1 Clement* 5.5-7; Pol. *Phil.* 3.2-3; 9.1-2)<sup>(37)</sup>.

Paul's description of himself as the apostle to the Gentiles par excellence is well-known from the other Pauline letters (Gal 1,16; 2,2.8-9; cf. Rom 1,5.13; 11,13; 15,15-18). Eph 3,5, however, appears somewhat anomalous, where Paul is merely one among the apostles and the prophets. In the undisputed letters Paul never speaks explicitly about any revelation given to the other apostles regarding the inclusion

<sup>(34)</sup> G. SELLIN, "Das 'Geheimnis' der Weisheit und das Rätsel der 'Christuspartei' (zu 1 Kor 1 - 4)", *ZNW* 73 (1982) 81, 89-90; P. STUHLMACHER, "The Hermeneutical Significance of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16", *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament. Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis for His 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (ed. G.F. HAWTHORNE - O. BETZ) (Grand Rapids 1987) 339-340; WOLTER, "Verborgene Weisheit", 304; REYNIER, *Évangile et mystère*, 154-155; H. MERKLEIN, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*. Kapitel 1-4 (ÖTK 7/1; Gütersloh 1992) 228; J.-N. ALETTI, "Sagesse et Mystère chez Paul: Réflexions sur le rapprochement de deux champs lexicographiques", *La Sagesse Biblique. De l'Ancien au Nouveau Testament* (ed. J. TRUBLET) (LD 160; Paris 1995) 366-367; R. PENNA, *Wisdom and Folly of the Cross* (Collegeville, MN 1996) 54-55; A. STANDHARTINGER, "Weisheit in *Joseph und Aseneth* und den paulinischen Briefen", *NTS* 47 (2001) 494.

<sup>(35)</sup> Cf. Reynier, who also notes as a manifestation of the paradoxical nature of Paul's ministry that it is as a prisoner (v. 1) Paul is a powerful preacher (v. 7-8) (*Évangile et mystère*, 93-98). It is an overstatement when N.A. Dahl concludes that Ephesians lacks the paradox of life through death and power through weakness, so characteristic of Paul ("Einleitungsfragen", 81).

<sup>(36)</sup> This allegedly exaggerated expression of humility is sometimes seen as evidence of post-Pauline authorship (SCHNACKENBURG, *Ephesians*, 136; KÜMMEL, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 361).

<sup>(37)</sup> *Barn.* 5.9, where the apostles are said to have been "sinners above all sin", cannot be cited as an example to the contrary. In this instance, the apostles are not invoked as examples. The purpose of the statement is to prove that Jesus was the Son of God. The argument is that only the Son of God could save sinners (cf. PERCY, *Die Probleme*, 351).



of the Gentiles. In Galatians the role of the other apostles is that of acknowledging the gospel Paul is preaching, not that of receiving a similar revelation themselves<sup>(38)</sup>. It has been suggested that the best explanation for this is that we are dealing with a post-Pauline element in Eph 3,5<sup>(39)</sup>.

The primary idea when Paul portrays himself as the apostle to the Gentiles, however, is that he is referring to his special commission to take the gospel to the Gentiles. The division mentioned in Gal 2,7 refers not to the reception of revelation, but to the sphere of missionary activity. With regard to the divine revelation that the gospel is offered to the Gentiles apart from the law, Paul stresses, especially in Galatians, that there is unity between him and the other apostles (2,2-3.6-9). The gospel he preaches is recognized by the leaders in Jerusalem<sup>(40)</sup>. Moreover, Paul underscores that he has received the same revelation of Christ as have the other apostles (1 Cor 9,1; 15,8).

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that Paul's unique position comes through more strongly in Galatians. In Ephesians, however, when Paul departs from describing the revelation as his personal prerogative and aligns himself with the apostles and prophets, this is not unmotivated; he recalls the expression from 2,20, where this group is called the foundation of the church. In 3,5, then, Paul is explaining his own role in the larger picture of the church as the temple of God. This ecclesiological focus in Ephesians is very different from the apologetical purpose of Galatians and explains the different emphasis.

That our understanding is correct is confirmed when we observe how the apostles here are described as a function of the church. This is

<sup>(38)</sup> Cf. PERCY, *Die Probleme*, 347; E. BEST, "The Revelation to Evangelize the Gentiles", *JTS* 35 (1984) 17-18. T. Zahn directs the attention to the accounts in Acts where similar revelations are given to Peter and James (Acts 10,10.34.46; 11,15; 15,7; cf. Acts 15,32), but the question is how to explain Paul's apparently changed perspective over against the report in Galatians (*Einleitung in das Neue Testament* [Leipzig 1906] I, 360).

<sup>(39)</sup> M. DIBELIUS – H. GREEVEN, *An die Kolosser, Epheser, an Philemon* (HNT 12; Tübingen 1953) 74; GNILKA, *Epheserbrief*, 166; MERKLEIN, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 168, 170; BEST, "The Revelation", 24-25; LINCOLN, *Ephesians*, 179; SCHNACKENBURG, *Ephesians*, 133; P. PERKINS, *Ephesians* (ANTC; Nashville 1997) 83. Even Percy, who usually remains unimpressed by the alleged differences between Ephesians and the undisputed Pauline letters, finds an argument against Pauline authorship here (*Die Probleme*, 347). M. Barth explains this by assuming that Paul is quoting traditional material in 3,5 (*Ephesians 1-3*, 332).

probably the reason why they are designated as “holy” (v.5)<sup>(41)</sup>. The antithesis is to “sons of men”<sup>(42)</sup>, which is a Hebraism for human beings (Mark 3,28). That suggests that the apostles are seen as holy, not in contradistinction to Christians in general, but in contradistinction to human beings in general. The mystery is not an exclusive prerogative of the apostles and prophets. When the divine wisdom, intimately related to the mystery, is made known to the powers and authorities (v. 10), the instrument is not the apostles and prophets, but the church. The reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles and their coexistence in unity as the body of Christ (1,22-23) are the first visible result of Christ’s reconciliatory work. This fact serves as a proclamation to the heavenly powers and authorities that the universal summing up of all things in Christ will become manifest in that they also will be subordinated to the headship of Christ<sup>(43)</sup>. The saints are also the recipients to whom the mystery is made known in 1,9, as it is in the parallel, Col 1,26.

This interpretation would be in line with the understanding of the apostolic and prophetic offices in the epistle to the Ephesians, as described in 4,11-12, where they are integrated into the function that is given to each individual in the church. The last of the two purpose clauses in v. 12 — “so that the body of Christ may be built up” — should probably not be taken as dependent on what has just been said about the offices, but on the previous purpose clause only: “to equip the saints for the work of ministry”. Thus, the building up of the body of Christ is the function of each believer. That the emphasis in the context is on the individual believer is confirmed by the fact that the section vv. 7-16 is marked out by an *inclusio* with “each one” (‘Ἐνὶ δὲ ἑκάστῳ, v. 7, and ἐνὸς ἑκάστου, v. 16)<sup>(44)</sup>.

<sup>(40)</sup> Even though these are not referred to as apostles, some of the other apostles are probably in view (R.N. LONGENECKER, *Galatians* [WBC 41; Dallas 1990] 48).

<sup>(41)</sup> Even though the apostles are understood as being set apart and elected for a special ministry, this does not explain the use of the term “holy” here. Contra MERKLEIN, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 190; BARTH, *Ephesians 1–3*, 335; LINCOLN, *Ephesians*, 179; BEST, *Ephesians*, 308; O’BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 233.

<sup>(42)</sup> P. EWALD, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Epheser, Kolosser und Philemon* (KNT 10; Leipzig <sup>1</sup>1910) 158. Similarly, SCHLIER, *Epheser*, 149.

<sup>(43)</sup> LINCOLN, *Ephesians*, 186-187; SCHNACKENBURG, *Ephesians*, 140-141; O’BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 248.

<sup>(44)</sup> GNILKA, *Epheserbrief*, 213; M. BARTH, *Ephesians 4–6* (AB 34A; New York 1974) 478-481; G.D. FEE, *God’s Empowering Presence. The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA 1994) 706; O’BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 304. Contra SCHLIER,

### 5. Abrogation of the Mosaic Law

Paul's description of the community of saints as a spiritual temple was anticipated in Qumran (1QS 8.5-6; 9.6), but Paul sets the concept in a totally different context<sup>(45)</sup>. In Qumran, the community was constituted as God's temple by a scrupulous observation of the Mosaic law, which required an absolute exclusion of the Gentiles (4QFlor 1-3.i.3-7)<sup>(46)</sup>. For Paul, the cornerstone<sup>(47)</sup> of the new temple is Christ, and it is characterized by a full inclusion of the Gentiles on an equal footing, and the basis for the identification of the church as the temple is the fact that Christ had abolished the Mosaic law.

This characteristic Pauline motif can be observed in the central section, 2,14-16. Vv. 13-18 display a remarkable pattern of literary parallelism<sup>(48)</sup>. The far-near (μακρόν - ἐγγύς) contrast of v. 13 is

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*Epheser*, 198-199; MERKLEIN, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 76; LINCOLN, *Ephesians*, 253; SCHNACKENBURG, *Ephesians*, 182-183; MUDDIMAN, *Ephesians*, 200.

<sup>(45)</sup> The early Christian identification of the believers and the temple seems to owe more to exegesis of the OT than to a direct dependence on the Qumran community. Cf. 1 Pet 2,4-10, which draws upon Isa 28,16; Ps 117,22 (LXX) (I.H. MARSHALL, "Church and Temple in the New Testament", *TynB* 40 [1989] 214).

<sup>(46)</sup> Cf. B.E. GÄRTNER, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament. A Comparative Study in the Temple Symbolism of the Qumran Texts and the New Testament* (SNTSMS 1; Cambridge 1965) 32-34, 62-63; E. SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA, "Cultic Language in Qumran and in the NT", *CBQ* 38 (1976) 173; M. NEWTON, *The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul* (SNTSMS 53; Cambridge 1985) 19. Cf. also T.L. Donaldson, who observes that the Qumran community held the most exclusivist view regarding the Gentiles. The only instance he finds where a Gentile may be included is when a Gentile woman is captured in battle and taken as a wife (11QT 63.10-15) (*Paul and the Gentiles. Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World* [Minneapolis 1997] 53, 319).

<sup>(47)</sup> The context favors the translation of ἀκρογωνιαίος as "cornerstone, rather than "capstone". See MCKELVEY, *The New Temple*, 195-204; R. SCHNACKENBURG, "Die Kirche als Bau: Epheser 2.19-22 unter ökumensichem Aspekt", *Paul and Paulinism. Essays in Honor of C.K. Barrett* (ed. M.D. HOOKER – S.G. WILSON) (London 1982) 263-264; O'BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 216-218; MACDONALD, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 249; HOEHNER, *Ephesians*, 405-406. Contra J. JEREMIAS, "γωνία κτλ.", *TDNT* I, 792; BARTH, *Ephesians 1-3*, 317-322; BEST, *Ephesians*, 284-285.

<sup>(48)</sup> The seamless integration of the first, vv. 11-13, and the second subsection, vv. 14-18, militates against the assumption that vv. 14-18 make up a hymn that has been incorporated into the letter. Contra SCHLIER, *Epheser*, 123; J. GNILKA, "Christus unser Friede – ein Friedens-Erlöserlied in Eph 2,14-17", *Die Zeit Jesu. Festschrift für Heinrich Schlier* (ed. G. BORNKAMM – K. RAHNER) (Freiburg 1970) 193-194; J.T. SANDERS, *The New Testament Christological Hymns*

repeated in v. 18. V. 14 introduces the concept of peace (εἰρήνη), which recurs in v. 15 and v. 17. The idea of making the two into one (ἀμφοτέρα - ἐν) occurs in v. 14 and repeats in v. 15b, 16a, 18. Finally, the term “enmity” (ἐχθραν) is paralleled in v. 14 and v. 16b. The parallels are delineated below:

13 νυνὶ δὲ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ὑμεῖς οἱ ποτε ὄντες **μακρὰν** ἐγενήθητε **ἐγγύς**  
ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ

14 Αὐτὸς γάρ ἐστιν ἡ **εἰρήνη** ἡμῶν,

ὁ ποιήσας τὰ **ἀμφοτέρα ἐν**

καὶ τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας, τὴν **ἐχθραν** ἐν  
τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ,

15 τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν  
καταργήσας,

ἵνα τοὺς **δύο** κτίσῃ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς **ἓνα** καινὸν ἄνθρωπον

ποιῶν **εἰρήνην**,

16 καὶ ἀποκαταλλάξῃ τοὺς **ἀμφοτέρους** ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι τῷ θεῷ  
διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ,

ἀποκτείνας τὴν **ἐχθραν** ἐν αὐτῷ.

17 καὶ ἐλθὼν εὐηγγελίσατο **εἰρήνην** ὑμῖν

τοῖς **μακρὰν** καὶ εἰρήνην τοῖς **ἐγγύς**

18 ὅτι δι’ αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν οἱ **ἀμφοτέροι** ἐν ἐνὶ  
πνεύματι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα.

Several scholars have attempted to organize these elements according to a chiasmic pattern, but no clear chiasm emerges<sup>(49)</sup>. It cannot be denied, however, that there is a pattern of parallelisms, and the center of the pattern is made up by v. 15a: “abolishing the law with its commandments and regulations”. This indicates that the

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(SNTSMS 15; Cambridge 1971) 14-15; BARTH, *Ephesians 1-3*, 261; A.T. LINCOLN, *Paradise Now and not Yet*. Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul’s Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology (Grand Rapids 1991) 150; G. WILHELM, “Der Versöhner-Hymnus in Eph 2,14ff”, ZNW (1987) 145-152; POKORNÝ, *Epheser*, 117-120. See further H. MERKLEIN, “Zur Tradition und Komposition von Eph 2,14-18”, BZ 17 (1973) 81-95; STUHLMACHER, “Er ist unser Friede”, 230; SCHNACKENBURG, *Ephesians*, 107; I.H. THOMSON, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters* (JSNTSS 111; Sheffield 1995) 85; BEST, *Ephesians*, 247-250.

(<sup>49</sup>) There is no agreement regarding the details of the chiasm. See the different suggestions put forward by J.C. KIRBY, *Ephesians. Baptism and Pentecost* (London 1968) 156-157; G. GIAVINI, “La structure littéraire d’Eph. ii.11-22”, NTS 16 (1970): 210; N. TURNER, *Style* (vol. IV of *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* [by J.H. MOULTON]) (Edinburgh 1976) 98; K.E. BAILEY, *Poet and Peasant* (Grand Rapids 1976) 63; THOMSON, *Chiasmus*, 93; MORITZ, *A Profound Mystery*, 38-39; M.-É. BOISMARD, *L’Énigme de la lettre aux Éphésiens* (EB 39; Paris 1999) 33. Cf. also the critique of LINCOLN, *Ephesians*, 126.

chief idea in this section is the abrogation of the Mosaic law<sup>(50)</sup>. When Paul in 3,3 refers to how he has previously written briefly about the mystery, therefore, the abrogation of the law is at the center of his attention.

Paul quotes from the Torah and evidently treats it as authoritative later in the epistle to the Ephesians, however. The abolition of the law should therefore not be understood in an absolute sense. That which is described in Eph 2,11-22 is a new covenant relationship. This relationship is of such an intimate nature that it defies regulation by law. The saints are now described as his household (v. 19). The abolishment of the law is constitutive of this new relationship, a relationship based on nearness and immediacy, not on law. Viewed under its function as regulating the covenant relationship, the law is abolished in its entirety<sup>(51)</sup>. This is the reason why the Gentiles can now

<sup>(50)</sup> THOMSON, *Chiasmus*, 86, 104.

<sup>(51)</sup> O'BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 199. Aletti objects that the concept of the abrogation of the law is not modified by any reference to "covenant" in the text (*Éphésiens*, 151). The perspective of Eph 2,11-22, however, is that of how the Gentiles, who once were foreigners to the covenants of promise, have now become fellow citizens with the saints. The law is in view under its function of regulating the covenant relationship. P. POKORNÝ maintains that the abrogation of the law applies to soteriology, but not to paraenesis (*Epheser*, 123). Beale insists that it is only a part of the law that is abrogated. He observes that Paul quotes and alludes to the moral law throughout the epistle to the Ephesians. In Col 2,15-17.20-21 Beale finds a description of those parts of the law that are abrogated, as he terms "the external nationalistic expressions of the Law" (*John's Use*, 242-243). The obvious problem with this position is the lack of evidence that Paul, or anyone in the first century, conceived of the law as divided into the moral law and "external nationalistic expressions". Correctly, MUSSNER, *Epheser*, 76-77; LINCOLN, "The Church", 612; GESE, *Das Vermächtnis*, 128-129; BEST, *Ephesians*, 260; MUDDIMAN, *Ephesians*, 132-133; HOEHNER, *Ephesians*, 375-376. Some commentators understand the abrogation of the law in a sociological sense, that is, that the law as causing the division between Jew and Gentile is intended (SCHNACKENBURG, *Ephesians*, 115; BARTH, *Ephesians 1-3*, 290-291; P. BALLA, "Is the Law Abolished According to Eph. 2:15?", *European Journal of Theology* 3 [1994] 15; U. LUZ, "Der Brief an die Epheser", *Die Briefe an die Galater, Epheser und Kolosser* [J. Becker – U. Luz] [NTD 8/1; Göttingen 1998] 138-139). The sense is primarily religious, however. The thrust of the pericope is that of nearness to the Lord. With the abolishment of the law, there is free access to the Lord. As a consequence of this the division between Jew and Gentile is also overcome. Similarly, R. PENNA, "La proiezione dell'esperienza comunitaria sul piano storico (Ef. 2,11-22) e cosmico (Ef. 1,20-23)", *RivB* 26 (1978) 172, 175; MORITZ, *A Profound Mystery*, 52-53; H. HÜBNER, *An Philemon An die Kolosser An die Epheser* (HNT 12; Tübingen 1997) 170-171; HOEHNER, *Ephesians*, 377.

be members of the same body. In the Old Testament they had to become circumcised (Gen 17,13; Exod 12,48), that is, they had to become Jews, in order to be fully incorporated into the people of God. But now, the Gentiles, as Gentiles, are fellow heirs and members of the same body.

This understanding of the mystery is confirmed when we note that there are some literary affinities between Eph 3,2-13 and 2 Cor 3,5 – 4,1:

2 Cor 3	Eph 3
κάλυμμα (vv. 13, 14)	μυστήριον (v. 3)
μη ἀνακαλυπτόμενον (v. 14)	οὐκ ἐγνωρίσθη (v. 5)
	ἀποκεκρυμμένου (v. 9)
περιαίρειται τὰ κάλυμμα (v. 16)	ἀποκάλυψιν (v. 3)
ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ (v. 18)	ἀπεκαλύφθη (v. 5)
πνεῦμα (v. 6)	ἐν πνεύματι (v. 5)
διακόνους (v. 6; 4,1)	διάκονος (v. 7)
ἰκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ (v. 5)	δωρεάν ... χάριτος ... δωθείσης (v. 7)
παρρησία (v. 12)	παρρησίαν (v. 12)
Διὰ τοῦτο ... οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν (4,1)	διό ... μὴ ἐγκακεῖν (v. 13) <sup>(52)</sup> .

In 2 Cor 3 it is pointed out that the new covenant has superseded the old (3,9-11) and that the old covenant has been abolished (3,11.13.14)<sup>(53)</sup>. Furthermore, in 2 Cor 3,2-3.6-7 Paul applies the promises of Jer 31,31; Ezek 11,19-20; 36,26-28 to the Gentiles. By doing so, Paul effectively states that the re-creation of Israel has taken place through his own ministry, resulting in Christ-believers from the Gentiles. The Gentiles have experienced the fulfilment of the promises to Israel in the messianic age<sup>(54)</sup>. Although there are significant differences between these passages, the resemblances in terminology seem to be prompted by the same motifs: the development in redemptive history characterized by the abrogation of the Mosaic law and the identification of the church and re-created Israel.

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<sup>(52)</sup> Cf. S. GRINDHEIM, "The Law Kills but the Gospel Gives Life: The Letter-Spirit Dualism in 2 Corinthians 3.5-18", *JSNT* 84 (2001) 113.

<sup>(53)</sup> The subject of καταργεῖται in 2 Cor 3,14 is better taken as the old covenant, rather than the veil. See V.P. FURNISH, *II Corinthians* (AB 32A; New York 1984) 210; R.P. MARTIN, *2 Corinthians* (WBC 40; Waco 1986) 69; contra S.J. HAFEMANN, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel. The Letter/spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3* (Peabody, MA. 1996) 379-380; THRALL, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 265-266.

<sup>(54)</sup> STOCKHAUSEN, *Moses' Veil*, 43-64, 70.

That which is hidden in 2 Cor 3,13-14 is the abrogation of the old covenant. This confirms our interpretation that the gospel in Eph 3 can be described as a mystery, previously unknown, because it entails the abrogation of the Mosaic law. The abrogation of the Mosaic law is a familiar Pauline motif (Rom 7,1-6; Gal 3,25; 4,5; Col 2,14)<sup>(55)</sup>.

These observations lead to the conclusion that the mystery can be referred to as previously unknown because of the unexpected manner in which the Gentiles are saved<sup>(56)</sup>. There are specifically two aspects of the inclusion of the Gentiles in the body of Christ that represent such a mystery. First, there is a degree of nearness enjoyed by the new covenant saints that transcends the expectations of the OT. Second, the inclusion of the Gentiles takes place on the basis of the abrogation of the Mosaic covenant<sup>(57)</sup>. As a result, Paul's view of the Gentiles is radically different from that of his contemporaries. No longer was a right standing with God conditioned upon observance of the Mosaic law. Nor could compliance with the Mosaic law code be seen as an adequate expression of a life governed by the Spirit (cf. Gal 5,18). The Gentiles' inclusion in the new body could therefore take place on quite unexpected terms, without them having to become Jews in order to enter into the people of God. They are not seen as proselytes to Israel<sup>(58)</sup>. To force them to become as Jews is a sin (Gal 2,11-14).

It has been observed that when he is employing arguments from

<sup>(55)</sup> Cf. H. RÄISÄNEN, *Paul and the Law* (WUNT 29; Tübingen 1983) 42-50; J.D.G. DUNN, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids 1998) 143-148. It is an overstatement when N.A. Dahl, referring to Rom 3,31, finds that Ephesians affirms what Paul denies ("Gentiles, Christians, and Israelites", 445; cf. POKORNÝ, *Epheser*, 122-123; PERKINS, *Ephesians*, 73; MACDONALD, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 245). In contrast, J. Gnllka thinks it unlikely that Col 2,14 can refer to the abolishment of the law, since the question regarding the law in Colossians is treated differently than in the older Pauline writings (*Der Kolosserbrief* [HTKNT; Freiburg 1980] 139). Aletti thinks there is a natural development from Romans to Ephesians (*Éphésiens*, 151).

<sup>(56)</sup> Cf. O'BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 232.

<sup>(57)</sup> The prophets, especially Jeremiah, seem to have anticipated a future when the Mosaic covenant would be superseded. Characteristic of these expectations was the internalization of the law (Jer 31,31-34). In particular, the idea of a spiritual circumcision was repeatedly emphasized in the OT (Deut 10,16; 30,6; Jer 4,4). What was previously unrevealed, however, was that the effect of the new covenant was to render irrelevant the external compliance with the Mosaic law code. This was not clearly revealed in the OT and seemed to require a specific revelation. The description of early Christianity in the book of Acts corroborates this understanding (cf. Acts 10-11).

<sup>(58)</sup> ALETTI, *Éphésiens*, 180, 181.

the Scriptures for the justification of the Gentiles Paul seems to avoid the prophecies about the pilgrimage of the nations<sup>(59)</sup>. Perhaps the reason is that Paul did not want to see the Gentiles' new status being understood in the light of the Jewish expectations of the fulfillment of these pilgrimage passages. These expectations were often associated with ideas of Jewish supremacy (Tob 13,11; 1 En. 90.30; 2 Bar. 72.4-6). Since Paul's concept of the fulfillment of these prophecies was incompatible with these expectations, it is possible that he wanted to avoid these connotations.

In 3,10 "the manifold wisdom of God" is used as a synonym for the mystery. Since the church is the instrument for making this wisdom known, some commentators identify the church with the mystery<sup>(60)</sup>. This is probably to go beyond the most natural meaning of the text, however<sup>(61)</sup>. Eph 3,10 says that the church is the instrument for making known the manifold wisdom of God. The church itself is not revealed or made known, but it is the instrument through which the wisdom is proclaimed. The concept of mystery as a previously unrevealed secret does not naturally lend itself to an identification with the church. That would imply that prior to its revelation, the church would be hidden in God's counsel. A more straightforward reading of Eph 3,9-10 is allowed for when the mystery is understood as the fact that God would bring Jew and Gentile together in a new body, disregarding the conditions imposed by the Mosaic law. The existence of the church proclaims this fact to the powers, thus making known the manifold wisdom of God.

## 6. *Un-Pauline Terminology?*

Our discussion of the "mystery" in Ephesians 3 has shown that the term has a distinctively ecclesiological focus. This is a novelty of the epistle to the Ephesians. True, the inclusion of the Gentiles is a major concern to Paul and in Rom 16,25-26; Col 1,27 it is said that a purpose of the mystery is the inclusion of the Gentiles. Eph 3,6 goes even further, however, and identifies the mystery with this inclusion<sup>(62)</sup>. It is often maintained, therefore, that it is indisputable that we have here a

<sup>(59)</sup> BEST, "The Revelation", 20-21; DONALDSON, *Paul and the Gentiles*, 194.

<sup>(60)</sup> SCHLIER, *Epheser*, 157; SCHNACKENBURG, *Ephesians*, 141.

<sup>(61)</sup> See further the critique by N.A. DAHL, "Das Geheimnis der Kirche nach Epheser 3,8-10", *id.*, *Studies in Ephesians*, 352-361.

<sup>(62)</sup> J.A. Robinson stresses the continuity too much when he concludes that the use of the term in Colossians and Ephesians is "no new one" (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* [London 1902] 238).



departure from the theology of Paul. In Paul, ecclesiology is determined by Christology, whereas in Ephesians it is the other way around: Christology is interpreted from the standpoint of ecclesiology<sup>(63)</sup>. That is why the inclusion of the Gentiles now can be understood as an adequate definition of the gospel.

It should be noted, however, that in Ephesians the gospel, or the mystery, is defined more broadly than simply as ecclesiology. The mystery is Christ and his reconciling work, encompassing the things in heaven and the things on earth (1,9-10)<sup>(64)</sup>. In a more narrow sense, corresponding to the earthly reconciliation, the mystery can refer to the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the church.

In the undisputed Pauline epistles the gospel can be described in a similar way<sup>(65)</sup>. The coming of Christ and the consequent abrogation of the Mosaic law result in a new status for the believers, where there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles (Gal 3,25-29)<sup>(66)</sup>. In Rom 11,11-36, these ideas are expressed with a terminology that resembles that of Ephesians. The passage explains how the stumbling of Israel has resulted in the salvation of the Gentiles. This salvation is described as the reconciliation of the world (11,15; cf. Eph 2,16), the primary reference being the cross of Christ (cf. the parallel in Rom 5,10), but the resulting new relationship between Jews and Gentiles is also in view<sup>(67)</sup>.

<sup>(63)</sup> E. KÄSEMANN, "Das Interpretationsproblem des Epheserbriefes", ID., *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* (Göttingen 1965) II, 254-255. Cf. KÜMMEL, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 360; HÜBNER, *Kolosser, Epheser, an Philemon*, 275-276. Similarly, Michael Gese maintains that the immediate connection between the reconciliation in the salvation event and the establishment of the church is an alien thought for Paul (*Das Vermächtnis*, 132-139). Note, however, that M.-É. Boismard, who takes Ephesians to be a redaction of an earlier letter by Paul, believes that Eph 2,14-18 is a part of the original letter, since the reconciliation theme is "très paulinien" (*Éphésiens*, 100).

<sup>(64)</sup> ROON, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, 351-352.

<sup>(65)</sup> Cf. also A. van Roon, who maintains that the predestined interbelonging of the Messiah and his people is a concept that Ephesians shares with the undisputed letters (cf. Rom 8,29) (*The Authenticity of Ephesians*, 352). Moreover, R. Hays maintains that there is a distinctively "ecclesiocentric hermeneutic" that characterizes Paul's use of the OT (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven, Mass. 1989] 84-121). The ecclesiological focus in Ephesians does not represent so much of an anomaly as it is sometimes claimed to do. (I am grateful to Dr. Daniel J. Treier for this suggestion.)

<sup>(66)</sup> ROON, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, 373.

<sup>(67)</sup> M.-J. LAGRANGE, *Saint Paul Épître aux Romains* (EB; Paris 1916) 278; C.K. BARRETT, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (BNTC; London 1971) 215; J.D.G. DUNN, *Romans 9-16* (WBC 38B; Dallas 1988) 657.

In the following verses, this new status is described as being grafted into a cultivated olive tree. As a result, the Gentile believer is now a partaker (συγκοινωνός, cf. Eph 3,6) of the rich olive root (11,17) of Israel. The primacy of Israel in this entity is then underscored (11,18-24). The salvation plan of God is also called a mystery (11,25). Clearly, this passage betrays significant parallels to the description of the mystery in Eph 2,11-3,13. But the significant differences should also be observed. The mystery in Rom 11,25 does not refer directly to the incorporation of the Gentiles. Rather, the primary reference is to God's way of bringing salvation to Israel by first bringing it to the Gentiles. Moreover, the primary referent of the "reconciliation" in Rom 11,15 is not the reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles, but Christ's reconciliation of human beings with God. Neither is the time difference between the reconciliatory work of Christ and the resulting new reconciled state as clearly reflected in Romans as it is in Ephesians. We note, however, that Christ's reconciliation is described in terms of its effects for the church and the incorporation of the Gentiles into Israel. Moreover, the term "mystery" is used for God's plan of bringing salvation to the Gentiles and subsequently to Israel. The description in Ephesians is prepared for in Romans.

The differences are probably best explained as a result of the different purposes of the letters. J.P. Sampley has suggested that Ephesians is about "identity formation" <sup>(68)</sup>. The ecclesiological focus of the description of Christ's work that we have seen in Rom 11,11-36; Gal 3,25-29, is amplified in Ephesians in order to educate the addressees about their status in Christ. If Clinton Arnold is correct that a main purpose of Ephesians is to help the readers gain an adequate understanding of the "powers" and their subjugation under Christ <sup>(69)</sup>, then this ecclesiological focus would serve to explain that the headship of Christ and the resulting reconciliation is already manifest in the church. This manifestation then in turn serves as an announcement of the effects of Christ's work to the "powers" (3,10).

Helmut Merklein further contends that there is a development from the undisputed letters to Ephesians regarding the technical term for the content of the apostolic preaching. In the homologoumena this technical term is "gospel", whereas in Ephesians this term has been

<sup>(68)</sup> "Ephesians", 23. Cf. K. SNODGRASS, *Ephesians*. The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids 1996) 23; O'BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 57.

<sup>(69)</sup> C.E. ARNOLD, *Ephesians: Power and Magic*. The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of Its Historical Setting (SNTSMS 63; Cambridge 1989) 167.

replaced by “mystery”. He observes that in the homologoumena verbs of speaking and hearing are typically used with gospel as the object (1 Cor 9,14; 15,1; 2 Cor 11,4,7; Gal 1,11,12; 2,2; 1 Thess 2,2), whereas in Ephesians this no longer is the case; it is “mystery” that is used instead (1,9; 3,3,5; 6,19)<sup>(70)</sup>.

Merklein has made too much of this evidence, however. In 1 Cor 2,6-7 Paul says that he speaks God’s wisdom in a mystery, an expression that refers to the gospel<sup>(71)</sup>. In Romans “gospel” is not used in this technical way at all but in 16,25-26 “mystery” is the object of γνῶριζω<sup>(72)</sup>. In 1 Cor 1,23 “Christ crucified” is used in this technical way and in 2 Cor 4,5 it is Jesus Christ as Lord (cf. 2 Cor 11,4; Col 2,6). Phil 1,15 refers to someone preaching Christ. In Gal 3,23 “faith” is probably used a circumlocution for “gospel” and in Phil 1,14 the technical term for the content of Paul’s preaching is λόγος (cf. 1 Thess 1,6,8; 2,13; 2 Tim 4,2). Apparently, “the grace of God” can be used similarly (2 Cor 6,1; Col 1,6)<sup>(73)</sup>. This is ample evidence that, throughout the Pauline corpus, there is a number of terms Paul finds pertinent to denote the content of his preaching. We have also seen that there is a certain laxity in the use of the term in Ephesians. It has not become a term with a fixed meaning. It is therefore unwarranted to find evidence for a post-Pauline development in the employment of “mystery” as a technical term for the gospel in Ephesians.

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The Jews and Gentiles being joined together in the same body represents the fulfillment of the prophecies regarding the re-creation of

<sup>(70)</sup> MERKLEIN, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 203-204. Similarly, GESE, *Das Vermächtnis*, 237; LUZ, “Epheser”, 144.

<sup>(71)</sup> WOLTER, “Verborgene Weisheit”, 304; W. SCHRAGE, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (EKK 7/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1991) I, 240; MERKLEIN, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther: Kapitel 1–4*, 224; R.F. COLLINS, *First Corinthians* (SP 7; Collegeville, MN. 1999) 123. If the reading “mystery” in 1 Cor 2,1 be correct this is an even clearer example of an identification of the term “mystery” with the gospel.

<sup>(72)</sup> The weight of this observation depends of course on one’s view of the integrity of the ending of Romans. This question falls outside the scope of this essay.

<sup>(73)</sup> Further examples from the canonical Pauline letters are Col 4,3, where Paul speaks the “mystery”, and 2 Thess 3,6, where “tradition” is used similarly.

Israel. This is described as a previously unknown mystery because of the unexpected manner in which this takes place. Observance of the Mosaic law is no longer a condition for incorporation into the people of God, and now both Jews and Gentiles can enjoy a nearness to God that transcends the expectations under the old covenant. In this respect, the passage in Eph 3,2-13 emphasizes the element of discontinuity between the old and the new covenant.

Although there is a development in the use of the term “mystery”, this development is not of such a kind so as to warrant the conclusion that Ephesians is post-Pauline. A conclusion regarding the authorship of Ephesians must be drawn on a more comprehensive basis than the issues we have discussed here<sup>(74)</sup>, but we have seen that the use of “mystery” terminology does not militate against Pauline authorship, but rather confirms it. The discourse on “mystery” in the letter to the Ephesians has interwoven many well attested and genuine Pauline themes, such as the historical primacy of Israel, the development of redemptive history and the abrogation of the Mosaic law, the Jews and Gentiles being united in the same body, the identification of the church and re-created Israel, the church as the temple, and, most importantly, the motif of a reversal of values and status claims. The merging of the two temporal schemas, the before and now of redemptive history and the before and now of personal salvation, is another device that is known from Galatians. These themes are reformulated and applied to the particular purpose of this letter: “identity formation” with a focus on ecclesiology. The letter betrays complex re-applications and creative combinations of Pauline themes and terminology. An imitator would more likely resort to formulaic mimicking of familiar Pauline expressions and perhaps introduce his or her own ideas with their own nomenclature, without being able to demonstrate such a degree of creative integration with Paul’s

<sup>(74)</sup> For others who maintain Pauline authorship, see SCHLIER, *Epheser*, 22-28; ROON, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*; M.D. GOULDER, “The Visionaries of Laodicea”, *JSNT* 43 (1991) 15-39; D.A. CARSON – D.J. MOO – L. MORRIS, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids 1992) 305-309; C.E. ARNOLD, “Ephesians, Letter to The”, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (ed. G.F. HAWTHORNE – R.P. MARTIN – D.G. REID) (Downers Grove 1993) 240-243; S.E. PORTER – K.D. CLARKE, “Canonical-Critical Perspective and the Relationship of Colossians and Ephesians”, *Bib* 78 (1997) 78-81; O’BRIEN, *Ephesians*, 4-47; HOEHNER, *Ephesians*, 20-61. Aletti is open to the possibility that the epistle was written by an amanuensis whom Paul had given considerable freedom (*Éphésiens*, 31).

terminology and thought world. Rather than seeing here the work of an ingenious imitator, therefore, it is better to explain the letter to the Ephesians as the apostle's re-formulation of his ideas in a new situation <sup>(75)</sup>.

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### SUMMARY

The purpose of this essay is two-fold. First, it argues that the inclusion of the Gentiles is referred to as a previously unrevealed mystery because it is based upon the abrogation of the Mosaic law and entails a degree of nearness to the Lord that exceeds the expectations of the old covenant. Second, it addresses the question of authorship. Assuming Pauline authorship as a working hypothesis, it shows that the use of the concept of mystery in Eph 3 is intimately linked with Paul's terminology and thought world attested in the undisputed letters. It is unwarranted, therefore, to find proof of a post-Pauline development in the use of the term "mystery" in Ephesians.

<sup>(75)</sup> Similarly, F.B. CLOGG, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (LTL; London <sup>3</sup>1948) 96; CARSON – MOO – MORRIS, *An Introduction*, 306.

# ANIMADVERSIONES

## Martha and Mary: Why at Luke 10,38-42?

It is clear from John's Gospel<sup>(1)</sup> that Martha and Mary have their home in Bethany, just outside Jerusalem; there is no reason to question the correctness of this Johannine geographical note<sup>(2)</sup>. Nor does there seem to be significant enough reason to suppose that the Martha and Mary of Luke 10,38-42 are not those who, according to John's Gospel, live in Bethany. It is remarkable, then, that these women appear at the beginning of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem; they would most appropriately be introduced elsewhere in Luke's story, i.e., somewhere around Luke 19 or 20, if Luke were following a strictly geographical scheme in bringing Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem. Luke does follow correct topography when he wants to: for instance, he places stories having to do with Jericho correctly, just before Jesus arrives in Jerusalem. Finally, one notes that, at Luke 10,38 there is only a vague reference to "a certain village" wherein Martha and Mary live. Is Luke unable to identify what we know to be the village of Martha and Mary<sup>(3)</sup>, or has he not more likely reduced the known, but inopportune village, to the unknown<sup>(4)</sup>?

All of the above rumination suggests that Luke has intentionally displaced the story of Martha and Mary; he wants the story *now*, in Chapter 10, and not any other place. And this leads to the question: why this story *here* in the journey narrative<sup>(5)</sup>? It is this question which this essay attempts to answer.

(1) Cf. John 11,1 together with 12,1-3.

(2) "The family were inhabitants of Bethany, a town located about 2 miles...from Jerusalem", J. COLLINS, "Martha", *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. D.F. FREEDMAN) (New York 1992) IV, 573; also J. MCKENZIE, *Dictionary of the Bible* (Milwaukee 1965), 551.553; I.H. MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids 1978) 451.

(3) Cf. R. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John* (AB 29; Garden City 1966) I, 422, "...many [scenes] Luke could not localize precisely, either chronologically or geographically..."; contrary is E.E. ELLIS, *The Gospel of Luke* (NCBC; Grand Rapids 1983) 161, "Luke likely would know where Mary and Martha lived".

(4) Very cautious here is D. BOCK, *Luke* (Grand Rapids 1996) II, 1040: he is willing to grant that the sequence in 10,25-42 is "thematic and topical", "If Bethany was the only home of these women...and if these two are the same ladies that are present in John...", MARSHALL, *Luke*, 451 suggests that Luke "omitted the name because he does not regard Jesus as being near Jerusalem at this point"; but this underlines the problem: if Luke knew he should be near Jerusalem to tell this story, why did he not wait till he got there in his narrative?

(5) For some authors, there is no substantive relationship between 10,38-42 and what precedes; for example, cf. J. FITZMYER, *The Gospel According to Luke* (AB 28; Garden City 1981) I, 891.

## I. The teaching of Luke 10,38-42

Given that Luke has placed the Martha-Mary story where it now is, what is it that he has placed? That is, what does this story have to offer? Analysis shows that the story highlights the saying of Jesus, that the 'good portion' <sup>(6)</sup> is 'hearing the word' of the Lord. Certain other observations are also indicated; Mary will not have this portion taken <sup>(7)</sup> from her, Martha's worries are of less concern than is listening to the word of the Lord — but these observations clearly flow from the supreme value of 'hearing the word' of the Lord, and reflection upon them more surely identifies what is the central affirmation of the story.

The meaning of the Martha-Mary story is clear; what might be its usefulness, not now in regard to its inner affirmation, but in its influence on something external to vv 38-42 <sup>(8)</sup> — given, as noted, that Luke insists that the story be told now. In this regard, we look for correlations <sup>(9)</sup> which might create a situation in which the 'hearing the word of the Lord' is significant. For reasons that will become apparent, I look to what precedes 10,38-42, rather than to what follows it.

## II. Luke 10,38-42 and Luke 10,24

Mary is depicted in Luke's story of the two sisters as one who 'was listening to the word' of Jesus. It is this listening <sup>(10)</sup>, or hearing, the word that will not be taken from her. Jesus had only shortly before been speaking about the profound, indeed unique relationship he <sup>(11)</sup> enjoys with his Father: only he knows the Father (10,22). This relationship seems mentioned because it affects Jesus' disciples; they are blessed because they are the ones to whom Jesus reveals the Father — all disciples will enjoy the knowledge Jesus has of his Father. Another way of emphasizing their blessedness is to say, as Jesus does, that his disciples see and hear what even prophets and kings longed to see and hear and did not. Such is the blessing of the disciple: to hear and see

<sup>(6)</sup> Or the 'best portion': "Cum linguae semiticae formis comparativis careant, etiam in lingua biblica interdum positivus adhibetur sive pro comparativo sive pro superlativo...subintellectâ collectivitate (scl. partium) ἡ ἀγαθὴ μέρος revera est "optima pars", M. ZERWICK, SJ, *Graecitas Biblica* (SPIB 92; Città di Castello '1960) 46-47; FITZMYER, *Luke*, 891, "the best part".

<sup>(7)</sup> Arguably a divine passive.

<sup>(8)</sup> Cf. FITZMYER, *Luke*, 891, "[10,38-42] is an episode unrelated to the preceding passages, unless one want to see in it another way of inheriting eternal life (v. 25), as does A. Plummer (*The Gospel*, 290)"; "contrary to Fitzmyer...and Ernst (1977,354)" is BOCK, *Luke*, 1038, n. 3: "...literary sequence and theme make [their opinions] seem unlikely; see esp. Talbert, 1982:125".

<sup>(9)</sup> Most authors see no relationship between v. 24 and vv. 25-37; exemplifying this opinion is G. ROSSÉ, *Il Vangelo di Luca* (Roma 1992), 401, "[Upon leaving v. 24] Ora egli [Luke] darà spazio alla sua preoccupazione pastorale".

<sup>(10)</sup> As in most cases of ἀκούειν in Luke, the word here is better translated 'listening favorably'; cf., e.g., Luke 6,17; 8,12.13.14.15; 10,16; 15,1

<sup>(11)</sup> Given the particularity, indeed uniqueness, involved in the terms ὁ πατήρ — ὁ υἱός, there seems every reason to understand these terms to speak of God Father, Jesus Son.

what Jesus knows about the Father. Not even the most privileged of history hear and see this.

Given this great privilege of the disciple, one is not surprised that Luke would repeat the idea; he does so by picturing Mary in no other way than in the finest position: she listens to the teaching of the Lord. One is not surprised, but joyful and can understand why the Lord will not remove her from listening to him: in listening to Jesus, she listens to him revealing the Father, and as no one else has ever done.

The repetition of the term ἀκούειν<sup>(12)</sup> within a short narrative time (verse 24, then verse 39) need not suggest the formality of literary *inclusio*<sup>(13)</sup>. However, there seems every reason to suppose that Luke knew quite well that he was, by repetition and story-telling, giving further emphasis to this blessing of ‘hearing’ that the disciple of Jesus enjoys. Indeed, there is no attempt on Luke’s part to flesh out the figure of Mary in his story; satisfactory for his account is the one thing we know about her, that she listens to the word of the Lord. Nor is the ‘word’ of Jesus in any way particularized; Luke is content that it be a most general ‘his word’ that the disciple attends to. One is made aware that Luke twice in a brief literary period emphasizes to Theophilus the treasure he has as disciple: he hears that the Son reveals the deepest meaning of the Father<sup>(14)</sup>.

As noted, identification of a literary *inclusio* seems uncalled for here, but one begins to suspect that Luke’s decision to repeat the notion of hearing what has never been heard before and the blessedness of the one who hears — one begins to suspect that Luke has intentionally placed these thoughts together so that they may play on each other. Why? One cannot help but look to the story Luke tells between his vv 24 and 39 in relation to ‘hearing’ what not even prophets and kings have heard. But then is there reason to call such attention to this story of the νομικός and Jesus? Is this story so unique, and is it a most treasured possession of the disciple, that it deserves special signals to make us ‘listen’ to it?

### III. The teaching of Luke 10,25-37

The overall affirmation of these verses reveals Jesus’ agreement with traditional teaching that by ‘doing’ love of God and love of neighbor one will

<sup>(12)</sup> MARSHALL, *Luke*, 438-439, notes that it is probably Luke who omits reference (in his v. 23) to ‘hearing’, contrary to Matthew who includes it. But then Marshall notes that it is all the more significant that Luke includes the notion of ‘hearing’ in v. 24, saying that “Luke retains the function of hearing which for Jesus is as important as seeing, in religious experience (cf. G. KITTEL, “ἀκούω”, *TDNT*, I, 220). For Marshall, Luke eliminates ‘hearing’ in v. 23 because Jesus is speaking of the direct experience of his 70 (72) disciples, but in v. 23 he speaks about the fuller experience of all future disciples, both in ‘seeing’ and in ‘hearing’.

<sup>(13)</sup> An example of quasi-inclusion of our type is Luke 5, 32 together with 5,36: ὁ λόγος ἐν ἔξουσίᾳ; this repetition frames the power of Jesus to work miracles, but in turn underlines the equal power of his teaching word to work miracles. For examples of Lucan inclusion in Acts, cf. R. TANNEHILL, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis 1990) 397; see also his discussion of parallelism, 354 in Acts.

<sup>(14)</sup> In John’s Gospel, the Holy Spirit will “teach you all things and recall to you all that I have said to you” (John 14,26); at least in the matter of public defense of the faith, Luke notes that “the Holy Spirit will teach what you are to say (12,12)”.



inherit eternal life (vv. 25-28 and v. 37). With reference to the statement of Jesus (24) that immediately precedes and, we think, introduces this overall teaching, there is nothing in his final affirmation of the Mosaic commands to love God and neighbor that 'prophets and kings' have not heard. All that can be said in this regard is that what traditional teachers of Israel taught is also the teaching of Jesus<sup>(15)</sup>.

On the other hand, within this traditional framework one meets the startling teaching of Jesus that love of neighbor means thorough care for anyone in trouble: 'anyone', in turn, means enemy as well as friend<sup>(16)</sup>, and this care extends to care given to the 'ritually impure' <sup>(17)</sup>. There is little support for Jesus' definition of 'neighbor' in traditional Israelite teaching, when he includes in it such figures as prostitutes, tax-collectors and, generally, 'sinners' <sup>(18)</sup>.

Love of enemy is not totally identified as forgiveness of an enemy. Jesus does urge forgiveness of one's enemies when, in parable, he encourages the Elder Son to rejoice at the return of the Younger Son to health, to life (Luke 15,25-32); he urges forgiveness of a brother who repents and seeks forgiveness, even if he asks seven times a day (Luke 17,3-4). But the parable which details the Samaritan's help of a Jew goes furthest in Jesus' defining who is the neighbor whom God obliges one to love in order to inherit eternal life, and who is the neighbor who loves. Forgiveness in itself need not define as 'neighbor' the person Jesus has in mind in 10,25-37; thus, his teaching about forgiveness need not stand as unique in Jewish teaching.

One does well to heed the observation that Luke, in 10,25-37, means to underline the detailed care offered to the person in need; a good portion of the parable recounts all that the Samaritan does for his neighbor, and this fits with the overall concern of the passage to determine what one must *do* to inherit eternal life. But, though such a warning is well placed, one cannot avoid the fact that the imaginative story within the passage means to identify the term 'neighbor' <sup>(19)</sup>, and in this context consciously makes not a Jew, but a

<sup>(15)</sup> Jesus shows himself traditional again at Luke 18,18-20, where he repeats, in the form of examples, the teaching of Israel; too, while Jesus encourages the Pharisees to practice 'justice and the love of God', he supports their efforts to "pay tithes on mint and rue and all the garden plants" — ταῦτα δὲ ἔδει ποιῆσαι κάκεινα μὴ παρῆναι (11,42).

<sup>(16)</sup> To make his point, Jesus apparently thinks it necessary to have the Samaritan care for the Jew, rather than vice-versa. It is not enough to draw from this piece of the story that the lawyer should love his enemy; if that were all on Jesus' mind, he could have taught this by having a Jew care for a Samaritan.

<sup>(17)</sup> Cf. C. TALBERT, *Reading Luke* (New York 1986) 124; in sum, Talbert recognizes two tendencies in the story, one to provoke and challenge one's beliefs about others, the other to offer an example of how one is to act towards even enemies in order to inherit eternal life. He recognizes that these two tendencies may be owed to Luke's drawing out of the story a lesson which, though present, was not the original teaching regarding challenge and provocation.

<sup>(18)</sup> It is not that traditional Jewish teachers did not want the conversion and repentance of sinners, but the preferred way of bringing these people to their senses was 'excommunication' — which had the further benefit of keeping the 'holy one' from the sin that derives from fraternization with sin.

<sup>(19)</sup> Cf. C. L'ÉPLATTENIER, *Lecture de l'évangile de Luc* (Paris 1982) 134, who notes Jesus' purpose in changing the sense of πλησίον: "...nous nous faisons nous-mêmes le prochain di celui qui a besoin di secours". But must one have a Samaritan-hero for this insistence?

Samaritan the hero. How much more acceptable would the imagined story be, if a Jew were the one to help a Samaritan; as the story stands, there is no advantage in being Jewish<sup>(20)</sup>. On this point the story irritates and startles<sup>(21)</sup>. But, in this essay, the importance of all these 'action details' helps define what 'love' is that Jesus teaches in regard to 'neighbor'. Can one be expected to do *all that* for an enemy? Such detail emphasizes the uniqueness of Jesus' teaching.

We return to our question: Jesus' clarity about the kind of person one is to love is startling<sup>(22)</sup>; is it so unique among Jesus' revelations of the mind of his Father that it deserves to be introduced and completed by emphasis upon attentive listening to the Lord, who has no parallel in his knowledge of the Father?

Jesus' teaching about how the Sabbath<sup>(23)</sup> is to be kept certainly upset many religious persons in Israel; alongside this matter is the wider question of ritual purity and in particular the ultimate definition of the Gentile, especially of the Christian Gentile, as member of "the church of God, purchased by the blood of His own" (Acts 20,28). One can hardly doubt the uniqueness of these teachings within the tradition of Israel. Moreover, equal to their uniqueness is the emphasis Luke bestows on them. The emphasis is not of the same type as that we find embracing the teaching of the Good Samaritan story, but, as one reads the Gospel and Acts, emphasis in its various forms is a clearly Lucan trait. One can argue about which of the teachings of Jesus is the most opposed to traditional Jewish teachings, but it seems clear enough that Luke presents such teachings, and will give significant emphasis, in a variety of ways, to those teachings of Jesus which distinguish him from other Jewish teachers<sup>(24)</sup>.

Thus, the claim that repetition is the form of emphasis Luke chooses here

<sup>(20)</sup> Cf. ROSSÉ, *Luca*, 408: "allora cadono tutti i motivi religiosi o nazionali". This observation has the potential to support this present essay, that there remains in the Gospel a need to make sure that the proper religious motive be put forth.

<sup>(21)</sup> Cf. M.-J. LAGRANGE, *Évangile selon Saint Luc* (Paris 1948) 314, "...le Samaritain est là pour créer le cas où l'exercice de la charité est le plus difficile à cause des haines de race, e peut devenir le plus beau".

<sup>(22)</sup> ROSSÉ, *Luca*, 408, suggests: "Accettare la conclusione della parabola implica il superare l'odio contro il samaritano e di conseguenza contro ogni straniero". Given the New Testament's testimony regarding Jesus and Samaritans, it seems valid to suggest such a implication.

<sup>(23)</sup> Luke, admittedly following Mark (but willingly), presents Jesus' attitude towards the Sabbath regulations by means of the emphasis found in two stories on the same theme being placed side by side (6,1-5.6-11); cf. also 13,10-17 and 14,1-6, the proximity of which emphasizes again the attitude of Jesus towards the Sabbath law.

<sup>(24)</sup> Luke uses various types of emphasis to call attention to Jesus' unique teachings. One is perplexed at first to find reference to adultery (Luke 16,18) as the conclusion to what had been a generalized critique of money-loving Pharisees who exalt what is abominable to God. Thinking about these people leads Jesus to comment about that Law which will not pass away before heaven and earth pass away. Such a reflection leads Jesus to make his concluding comment about adultery. Were one to say that the ensuing parable about the 'rich man' carries out Jesus initial critique of the 'money-loving Pharisees', one then wonders why the 'distracting' reference to adultery? But the very fact that this reference distracts is *its own form of emphasis*, making one singularly aware that Jesus, without justifying his position by argument, considers abominable before God the traditional Jewish teaching which contradicts this divine command.

in Chapter 10 to emphasize a singular teaching about 'the neighbor' is not out of order; Luke amply uses literary emphasis<sup>(25)</sup>. We may not have here a literary *inclusio*, but by these two references (10,24 and 10,39)<sup>(26)</sup> one is aware of being focused upon the word of the Lord and thus made to give great importance to listening carefully to what Jesus teaches in Luke 10,25-37.

The intent of this brief essay has been to justify the claim that the Martha-Mary story is in its present location in the Gospel at the very least in part in order to emphasize the supreme importance Luke gives to the teaching of Jesus in Luke 10,25-37<sup>(27)</sup>; this teaching is a revelation not enjoyed by 'kings and prophets'. Emphasis of Jesus' revelations of the mind of his Father is a strong tool for Luke, in all its forms. But within this explanation one can still find room, I believe, for a particular explanation implicit in various authors<sup>(28)</sup> as to why Luke had the Martha-Mary story follow upon the Good Samaritan parable. Because the textual/literary signals are not as evident to sustain this thesis as they are to argue for the centrality of the Good Samaritan story as a particularly notable teaching of the Lord, one can call this thesis 'secondary' — for all that, it seems reasonable and sustainable, once it is fitted into the unique significance of 'the teaching of the Lord'.

In its developed form this thesis would suggest that Luke wanted to correct a possible misunderstanding of the Good Samaritan story, particularly about the influence of the verb ἐσπλάγχχνισθη upon the Samaritan's decision

<sup>(25)</sup> Among the many examples of emphasis in Luke, consider the message of the angel to Mary: "The Lord will give him the throne of his father David; he will rule over the house of Jacob; his rule will have no end" (1,32-33); consider the incomprehension of the disciples: "They did not understand this word; it was kept from them that they might not perceive it; they feared to ask about this word" (9,45). Another kind of emphasis is that which includes two prophecies of suffering mixed with the Transfiguration and healing, teaching about the 'greatest' and about 'who is against you' (9,21-50). Compare the summary in 7,22 with the many miracles which precede it, especially that of the son of the widow of Naim.

<sup>(26)</sup> L'EPLATTENIER, *Luc*, 135 prefers to link 10, 38-42 (especially because of v. 41) with 12,8-12 (especially because of v. 11).

<sup>(27)</sup> BOCK, *Luke*, 1038, prefers to say that "this pericope [the Martha-Mary story] is part of a three-unit section that deals with a disciple's responsibilities before God"; the first two of these responsibilities he identifies as "love of neighbor, devotion to God and his teaching through faithful attention to Jesus (Klostermann, 1929: 122; Grundmann, 1963: 225)", 1038. F. BOVON, *L'Évangile selon Saint Luc* (9,51 – 14,35) (Genève 1996), 82 prefers to see the relationship of the stories: "Comme le commandement est donc double, deux péripécies suivent pour l'illustrer". MARSHALL, *Luke*, 439, points to "a counterbalance to the emphasis on practical love...by stressing the need for disciples to attend to the teaching given by Jesus". I would prefer to say that vv. 38-42 do not counterbalance vv. 25-37, but rather support them by calling attention to them, through a quasi-inclusion (vv. 24 and 39), as the teaching of the Son. Cf. LAGRANGE, *Luc*, 316, "En le [vv. 38-42] plaçant ici, Luc a-t-il voulu montrer qu'il y avait encore quelque chose de supérieur aux oeuvres de misérordoré? C'est possible..."

<sup>(28)</sup> For instance, A. PLUMMER, *Gospel According to Luke* (ICC; Edinburgh 1922) 290, "He perhaps inserts [vv. 38-42] here as a further answer to the question "What must one do to inherit eternal life?" Mere benevolence, such as that of the Samaritan, is not enough. It needs to be united with, and founded on, habitual communion with the Divine"; cf. also G. SCHNEIDER, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (ÖTBK; Gütersloh 1977) 246, "Diese Perikopen sind als grundelegende Jüngerweisung gewiss aufeinander bezogen, so dass die Aufforderung zum Handeln (V 37) durch die zum Hören auf Jesus also dem einen Notwendigen (V 42) ergänzt wird".

to help. What appears to have 'motivated' the Samaritan was his sympathy for the half-dead traveler; no other explanation of his actions is given. Possibly the conclusion might be drawn that moral action is motivated by one's feelings. With this troublesome possibility in view, Luke followed the Good Samaritan story with the proper motivation of all moral decision: the word of the Lord<sup>(29)</sup>. Thus, one can conclude that 10,25-37 and 38-42 belong together so that the latter corrects a possible misunderstanding of the former<sup>(30)</sup>. As corrective to this possible misconception of what Jesus would identify as the motive of moral action<sup>(31)</sup>, then, Luke artfully joins to the Samaritan story a lesson originally given in Bethany, near the end of Jesus' journey narrative: it is the teaching of Jesus that governs moral action<sup>(32)</sup>.

The above suggestion, though not developed by Luke, has, in various ways, been supported by scholars as they come to grips with the fact that it is not a Jew in Jesus' story who is loving his enemy, but a Samaritan who is loving a Jew. A Samaritan, for all his claims to roots in Yahwistic religion, was considered anything but a faithful child of Yahweh; thus, in proposing him as hero, Jesus proposes a figure who cannot be considered to 'love God and love neighbor'; how, then, can the Samaritan be a model in an 'example' story? The problem may not be Luke's, but only ours, yet its solution meets at the same point as does the main point of this essay: Luke wants Theophilus to pay supreme attention to the unique teaching of Jesus about love of neighbor, for it is nothing other than the revelation of the mind of the Father, a revelation withheld till now from 'prophets and kings'.

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We are comfortable with the thought that Luke can arrange his materials to accomplish his very worthy goals. As an example of this freedom we find Luke 10,38-42 to follow upon 10,25-37. The reason for the conscious linking

<sup>(29)</sup> Cf. ROSSÉ, *Luca*, 412-413: "importa ascoltare la parola di Gesù perché autentica espressione del volere divina espressa nel comandamento dell' amore del prossimo. L'ascolto della parola di Cristo...diventa la condizione essenziale per ereditare la vita eterna (v. 25)".

<sup>(30)</sup> In accord with this is Luke's unwillingness to ascribe to Jesus 'sympathy' as the reason governing Jesus' miraculous powers — only once does he do it (cf. Luke 7,13), and in a situation in which it is clear that 'sympathy' is directed toward the woman and not toward the dead who, as object of Jesus' power, will be raised up to live again.

<sup>(31)</sup> It is often noted that, if Luke had Mark as his source, Luke consciously, in three places, eliminated 'sympathy' as a motive for working miracles: cp. Mark 1,41-Luke 5,12-16; Mark 6,34 (8,2)-Luke 9,10-17; Mark 9,22-Luke 9,37-43a. On the other hand, Luke does note Jesus' sympathy with the widow of Naim (7,13). Perhaps Luke eliminated the notion of 'sympathy' in re-telling stories from Mark in order to make clear that the object(s) of Jesus' power were not looked upon from the viewpoint of 'sympathy': the direct object of Jesus' power at Naim was the deceased young man, not the widow. The exercise of Jesus' power, in Luke's view, should say more about Jesus than that he is 'sympathetic'.

<sup>(32)</sup> Cf. W. HENDRICKSEN, *The Gospel of Luke* (Edinburgh 1978) 533, "Active love toward the neighbor must result from and accompany listening to and heeding the words of the Master". However, later, this author notes, in accord with many others, that the Good Samaritan story "places emphasis on the second table of the law, the present story [vv. 38-42] stresses the first", 597.

of these two stories is, primarily, Luke's concern to highlight the teaching of Jesus at 10,25-37 as worthy of all one's attention, as a significant part of the 'one thing necessary', and as the revelation of the Father whom no one else knows as does Jesus, and, secondarily, to teach that the motivation of all Christian moral action is supremely the teaching of Jesus.

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#### SUMMARY

Given that Luke has wide freedom to arrange his stories as he thinks best, one looks to the material surrounding the story of Mary and Martha to better understand why that story is in its present place. It seems best to think of this story as an affirmation of the teaching of the 'one thing necessary', the teaching within the story of the Good Samaritan. Indeed, the Mary-Martha story underlines the Lucan emphasis on the primacy of all Jesus' teaching.

## When Was the First Temple Destroyed, According to the Bible?

When was the first Temple destroyed, according to the Bible? We find two contradictory answers to this question, one in 2 Kgs 25,7-8, and the other in Jer 52,12<sup>(1)</sup>.

### Jer 52,12-13

In the fifth month, on the *tenth* day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan... burned the house of the LORD

### 2 Kgs 25,8-9

In the fifth month, on the *seventh* day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan... burned the house of the LORD

This problem is connected to the larger issue of the relationship between the destruction narrative in 2 Kgs 25 and that in Jer 52. This article will suggest a solution to this problem, after examining the different textual witnesses to Kings and to Jeremiah, and the different attempts scholars have made to resolve the contradiction.

### 1. Textual Solutions

According to one group of scholars, differences between the Kings version and the Jeremiah version regarding the date of the Temple's destruction derive from a textual corruption<sup>(2)</sup>. According to one approach, the earliest text gave the date as the seventh, and later copyists of Jeremiah accidentally omitted part of the letter *shin*, and read *ayin* in its stead. The text of Kings had the abbreviation *bet-shin* for the word "on the seventh", and read instead *bet-ayin*, "on the tenth." Another approach sees the source of the error as the copying of *bet-zayin* (on the seventh) instead of *bet-yod* (on the tenth).

Skinner explains that "[T]he Hebrews marked their numbers by letters [...] there is great similarity between many of the letters in their alphabet" <sup>(3)</sup>.

These proposals assume that the textual corruption occurred when the modern Hebrew alphabet was in use, and are not relevant to paleo-Hebrew. There is no concrete evidence in textual witnesses or manuscripts for Skinner's proposal.

### 2. Chronological Solutions

Some scholars, who dealt with the chronology of the monarchic period, recorded both of the dates mentioned without coming down on one side or the other<sup>(4)</sup>.

<sup>(1)</sup> All Biblical references in this paper are according to the RSV.

<sup>(2)</sup> E.g. O. THENIUS, *Die Bücher der Könige* (Leipzig 1873) 474.

<sup>(3)</sup> J. SKINNER, *I & II Kings* (The Century Bible; Edinburgh 1893) 254.

<sup>(4)</sup> See the bibliography cited in D.J.A. CLINES, "Regnal Year Reckoning in the Last Years of the Kingdom of Judah", *On the Way to the Postmodern. Old Testament Essays*

Other scholars suggest solving the contradiction between Kings and Jeremiah by positing that the chronologies used in the two books differ: according to one chronological system the year began at Nisan while according to the other system — at Tishri<sup>(5)</sup>. These scholars dealt primarily with the differences between Kings and Jeremiah in regard to the regnal years of Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 25,8; Jer 52,29), but did not discuss the contradictory dates of the Temple's destruction.

### 3. *The Relationship between 2 Kgs 25 and Jer 52 and Its Contribution to the Solution of the Problem*

In order to decide between the date of destruction given in Kings' version and that in Jeremiah, we must address a broader question: Did the author of Kings borrow the description from Jeremiah, or vice-versa? Or, perhaps, did both of them borrow from a third source?

Jer 52 is generally considered to be a "historical appendix" which was added to the book of Jeremiah in order to demonstrate that Jeremiah's prophecies were realized<sup>(6)</sup>. According to this view, Jeremiah originally ended at 51,64.

Some scholars hold the view that Jeremiah took the material relating to the Temple's destruction from Kings<sup>(7)</sup>. In this view, the relationship between Isa 36–39 and 2 Kgs 18–20 can be explained in a similar way. This approach also relies on the fact that the description in the LXX is shorter than that in the MT<sup>(8)</sup>.

Another view is that the author of Kings took the material from Jeremiah, since in Jeremiah the description, which also includes the story of the murder of Gedaliah (Jer 40–41), is much more detailed<sup>(9)</sup>.

R.F. Person<sup>(10)</sup> sees Jer 52 as a greatly expanded version of an older version, which is reflected in the LXX. The text in Jeremiah was adapted to fit that of Kings. The author of Jeremiah took the text from Kings but did not abbreviate it; rather, he made it fit Jeremiah, added explanations, and

1967–1998 (JSOTSS 292; Sheffield 1998) I, 395–425. See also G. GALIL, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah* (Leiden – New York 1996) 118, 158.

<sup>(5)</sup> For bibliography see CLINES, "Regnal Year".

<sup>(6)</sup> See W. MCKANE, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah* (ICC; Edinburgh 1996) II, clxxii.

<sup>(7)</sup> See W.L. HOLLADAY, *Jeremiah 2* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia 1989) 439; C.R. SEITZ, *Theology in Conflict. Reactions to the Exile in the Book of Jeremiah* (BZAW 176; Berlin – New York 1989) 165, 197, 268. On the relationship between Jer 39, Jer 52, and 2 Kgs 25 see G. FISCHER, "Jeremia 52 – ein Schlüssel zum Jeremiabuch", *Biblica* 79 (1998) 338, 354–355.

<sup>(8)</sup> G. JANZEN, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah* (Cambridge, MA 1973); E. TOV, "The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in Light of Its Textual History", *The Greek and Hebrew Bible. Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (VTSup 72; Leiden – Boston – Köln 1999) 363–384; L. STULMAN, *The Prose Sermons of the Book of Jeremiah. A Redescription of the Correspondences with the Deuteronomistic Literature in the Light of Recent Text-critical Research* (Atlanta 1986); H.-J. STIPP, "Linguistic Peculiarities of the Masoretic Edition of the Book of Jeremiah: An Updated Index", *JNSL* 23 (1997) 181–202.

<sup>(9)</sup> SEITZ, *Theology*, 240–273.

<sup>(10)</sup> R.F. PERSON, *The Kings-Isaiah and Kings-Jeremiah Recensions* (BZAW 252; Berlin – New York 1997) 95–99.

integrated the description into a new context. Person's reconstruction of the Urtext of Kings and Jeremiah has the original text as "on the seventh"<sup>(11)</sup>. He explains his view as follows: "Since a satisfactory decision cannot be made regarding the original reading, the KH [= the Hebrew version of Kings] reading is given"<sup>(12)</sup>.

We do not think that the author of Jeremiah took the material in Jer 52 from 2 Kgs 25, but rather that both borrowed from a common third source.

Some of the differences between Jer 52 and 2 Kgs 25 can be explained by each author using the materials differently. Person's view that the original source is Kings, and that Jeremiah borrowed and abbreviated it cannot be accepted, since some points that appear in Jeremiah do not appear in Kings.

The differences between Jer 52 and 2 Kgs 25 that can be explained in this way include the different descriptions of Zedekiah in the two books<sup>(13)</sup>; the different foci of the two books on the fate of the Temple and the sacred vessels<sup>(14)</sup>; the different descriptions of Gedaliah's murder<sup>(15)</sup>; as well as different descriptions of the release of Jehoiachin from prison<sup>(16)</sup>. All of these points strengthen the argument of some scholars<sup>(17)</sup> who favour a third common source from which the authors of Kings and Jeremiah borrowed, with each author reworking the material to fit the context of his book. While in Kings, the narrative of the destruction is designed to serve as the final point about the Kingdom of Judah, depicting its destruction as punishment for the kings' sins, the purpose of Jer 52 is to demonstrate that Jeremiah's prophecies came to pass.

It seems that this conclusion is to be preferred to any assumption that the author of Jeremiah took material from Kings, and added to it his own material, while correcting corruptions.

One ought to take into account the fact that the description of Zedekiah's end, as well as that of Jerusalem in Kings is very corrupted<sup>(18)</sup>. The text of Jeremiah is to be preferred to that in Kings; and the reasonableness of this preference emerges from an examination of the following arguments:

1. The plural form וַיָּבִיאוּ ("they laid siege") in Jer 52,4 seems preferable to the singular וַיָּבִיחַ in 2 Kgs 25,1. Similarly, the plural form וַיֵּצְאוּ ("they...went out") in Jer 52,7 is to be preferred to the singular וַיֵּצֵא in 2 Kgs 25,4.

<sup>(11)</sup> PERSON, *Recensions*, 101.

<sup>(12)</sup> PERSON, *Recensions*, 104.

<sup>(13)</sup> See H.-J. STIPP, "Zedekiah in the Book of Jeremiah: On the Formation of a Biblical Character", *CBQ* 58 (1996) 627-648; J. APPELGATE, "The Fate of Zedekiah: Redactional Debate in the Book of Jeremiah", *VT* 48 (1998) 137-160, 301-308.

<sup>(14)</sup> FISCHER, "Jeremia 52 – ein Schlüssel", 345, 349.

<sup>(15)</sup> E.W. NICHOLSON, *Preaching to the Exile*. A Study of the Prose Traditions in the Book of Jeremiah (Oxford 1970); K.F. POHLMANN, "Erwägungen zum Schlusskapitel des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerkes, oder, Warum wird der Prophet Jeremia in 2 Kön 22-25 nicht erwähnt?", *Textgemäss – Aufsätze und Beiträge zur Hermeneutik des Alten Testaments*. Festschrift E. Wurthwein (eds. A.H.J. GUNNEWEG – O. KAISER) (Göttingen 1979) 94-109; SEITZ, *Theology*, 215-222.

<sup>(16)</sup> See, e.g. G. WANKE, *Untersuchungen zur sogenannten Baruchschrift* (BZAW 122; Berlin – New York 1971) 115.

<sup>(17)</sup> P.R. ACKROYD, *Exile and Restoration*. A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century BC (London 1968) 79-80.

<sup>(18)</sup> Cf. M. COGAN – H. TADMOR, *II Kings* (AncB 11; New York 1988) 321.



2. The sentence *וְכָל-אֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה הַלַּיְלָה* (“all the men of war by night”) in 2 Kgs 25,4 is truncated, and the version in Jer 52,7 *וְכָל-אֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה יָבְּרוּ* (“all the men of war fled”) is preferable<sup>19</sup>.

3. The list of vessels taken by Nebuchadnezzar in Jer 52 is more detailed. Compare Jer 52,17-23 to 2 Kgs 25,13-17.

4. Numbers: Instead of seven people, as in Jer 52,25, 2 Kgs 25,19 has five; instead of five cubits in Jer 52,22, 2 Kgs 25,7 has three cubits. The text “five cubits” accords with the list in 1 Kgs 7,15.

\*  
\* \*

It seems that the contradiction between the books of Kings and Jeremiah regarding the date of the First Temple’s destruction cannot be resolved either by textual emendation or by chronological solutions. We hold that there is no point in trying to harmonize these contradictory dates, and that only one of the dates should be regarded as ancient. This date, according to our view, is the tenth of Ab, as is written in Jeremiah 52<sup>(20)</sup>.

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## SUMMARY

This article deals with the contradiction between 2 Kgs 25 and Jer 52 regarding the date on which the First Temple was destroyed. Comparing the descriptions of the destruction in Kings and in Jeremiah shows that the two descriptions were borrowed from a common third source. In our view, this common third source is better preserved in Jeremiah 52 than in 2 Kings 25. We therefore deduce that Jeremiah 52 preserves the more exact date of the Temple’s destruction: the tenth of Ab. This claim is based on the fact that the description of the destruction in Kings is in any case truncated, and is therefore likely that it contains the textual corruptions as opposed to Jeremiah.

<sup>(19)</sup> See COGAN – TADMOR, *II Kings*, 317.

<sup>(20)</sup> I wish to thank Prof. Dr. George Fischer for reading and commenting on a first draft of this paper.

# RECENSIONES

## Vetus Testamentum

Enrique SANZ GIMÉNEZ-RICO, *Cercanía del Dios distante. Imagen de Dios en el libro del Éxodo* (Estudios 84). Madrid, Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2002. 476 p. 17 × 24.

Questa monografia è il risultato della Tesi di Dottorato dell'A., sostenuta nella Università Pontificia Comillas di Madrid nel 2000 con il titolo "*Y la gloria de Yahveh llenó el tabernáculo* (Ex 40,34)", sotto la direzione del Prof. J.L. Sicre, rivista per la pubblicazione. Il titolo compendia il tema studiato, cioè l'immagine di Dio che emerge da una lettura unitaria del libro dell'Esodo, in una ricerca scandita in sei tappe.

1) Nell'Introduzione (27-33) l'A. anticipa il tema, lo scopo e la metodologia, tracciandone i limiti; l'ambito del suo studio è unicamente il libro dell'Esodo; il suo obiettivo è la messa a fuoco degli aspetti peculiari di Dio come protagonista del racconto del libro, in vista di un apporto che possa arricchire la comprensione del Dio dell'AT (27); il metodo adottato è quello dell'analisi narratologica e retorica, squisitamente sincronica, anche se l'A. non disdegna incursioni di tipo diacronico (32, n.14).

2) Nel Capitolo I "Tratamiento del tema en diversos estudios" (35-75), l'A. passa in rassegna 85 studi, tra commentari, monografie ed articoli consacrati all'Esodo, senza la velleità di offrire uno *status quaestionis* esauritivo della ricerca, ma con l'intento di dimostrare che il tema dell'immagine di Dio non ha riscosso la dovuta attenzione, o è stato trattato in maniera parziale, senza la ineludibile contestualizzazione nella strategia narrativa del libro. Anche gli ultimi cinque studi-campione, maturati nell'alveo della Teologia della Liberazione, non sfuggono ad un giudizio di insufficienza (73-75).

3) Nel Capitolo II "Dios en el Libro del Éxodo" (77-146), l'A. delimita le varie unità testuali del libro per poi evidenziare i tratti distinti di Dio che vi appaiono. Il criterio adottato per la determinazione delle varie unità è quello del vincolo personale e definitivo di Dio con Israele; a dare coesione a tutti gli eventi narrati, infatti, non è la "formula d'itinerario", né il personaggio di Mosè, bensì la sequenza domanda-risposta che attraversa tutto il libro, cioè "*Dio è il sovrano d'Israele? - Dio è il sovrano d'Israele perché abita definitivamente in mezzo ad esso*" (77). L'A. divide il libro in tre grandi "blocchi", a loro volta suddivisi in sezioni e macro-unità: la prima parte "Dio libera Israele dall'oppressione egizia" (Es 1,1-15,21) viene strutturata nelle seguenti macro-unità: 1,1-2,22; 2,23-5,23; 6,1-15,21; la seconda parte "Dio accompagna Israele nel deserto" (Es 15,22-18,27) viene strutturata nelle macro-unità: 15,22-27; 16,1-

36; 17,1-7; 17,8-16; 18,1-27; la terza parte "Dio abita definitivamente in mezzo al suo popolo" (Es 19,1-40,38) viene articolata nelle sezioni 19,1-24,11 e 24,12-40,38; quest'ultima risulta suddivisa nelle macro-unità seguenti: 24,12-15a; 24,15b-31,17; 31,18-34,35; 35,1-40,38. Un paragrafo finale sottolinea le tematiche che legano reciprocamente i tre blocchi, sintetizzandole in due caratteristiche comuni: a) il riferimento all'evento del passaggio del Mar Rosso; b) la formula d'itinerario (145-146). Una breve conclusione riassume le linee salienti dell'immagine di Dio emerse da questo primo percorso generale (146-147).

4) Nel cap. III "Estudios de unidades textuales del libro del Éxodo" (151- 417) l'A. seleziona nove unità testuali da ognuno dei tre blocchi, in base al criterio determinante del ruolo di Dio come protagonista. Lo studio di ogni unità si articola in: a) una introduzione; b) una breve delimitazione (anticipata nel II capitolo); c) la sua divisione e contenuto; d) la sua funzione nel racconto; e) una conclusione riassuntiva dell'immagine di Dio che ne emerge.

Dalla prima parte sceglie cinque unità testuali: Es 1,1-22; 2,23-4,17; 4,18-28; 7,8-10,29; 13,17-15,21. In Es 1,1-22, che costituisce la posta in gioco del racconto, appaiono due aspetti complementari e fondamentali di Dio, che riaffioreranno costantemente nel corso del libro e ne costituiscono la chiave di lettura: la sua assenza e la sua presenza. Nel contrasto con l'antagonista Faraone, Dio sembra essere assente ed impotente, ma non lo è; egli resta fedele alle promesse fatte ai patriarchi, e si rivela un Dio amante e generatore della vita, libero e coinvolto con quanto succede ad Israele in schiavitù, integrando nel suo disegno la sofferenza del suo popolo. In Es 2,23-4,17 si riconferma il binomio "vicinanza/distanza" divino; la sua distanza appare nella sua autorivelazione sull'Oreb, ove non si lascia vedere da Mosè, ma gli si consegna mediante la Parola; la sua vicinanza si esprime nel suo pieno coinvolgimento con la sofferenza d'Israele (2,23-25) e nel suo programma salvifico (3,1-4,17), in cui spiccano due aspetti caratteristici: la sua identità e continuità con il Dio dei patriarchi, e per la prima volta, la scelta paziente di un mediatore: Mosè. Con un rapido accenno ai segni concessi a Mosè in Es 4,2-9, l'A. sottolinea la piena sovranità di Dio sul cosmo e sulla vita umana, capace di trasformarla in senso positivo e negativo per gli uomini (207). In Es 4,18-28, che funge da ponte tra il programma divino sull'Oreb e la sua realizzazione in Egitto, si narra la misteriosa aggressione di Dio a Mosè (cui viene dedicato un *excursus*, 219-223), in cui Dio si rivela protettore e non violento; non esegue il castigo che Mosè merita per il precedente assassinio dell'egiziano, ma rispetta la vita del suo inviato e lo trasforma in vista della sua missione in favore d'Israele. In Es 7,8-10,29 il personaggio di Dio si staglia in antitesi a quello del Faraone, rivelando non solo la sua giustizia ed il suo potere sulla natura e nella storia, ma anche la sua pazienza nei confronti del re d'Egitto; la sequenza delle piaghe, infatti, si configura come una controversia bilaterale (*rib*) in cui Dio si presenta come parte lesa nei confronti del Faraone, cercando di persuaderlo a lasciare libero il suo popolo, affinché tutte le creature riconoscano la sua sovranità sul cosmo; l'indurimento del cuore del Faraone sottolinea non solo che il suo rifiuto fa parte del disegno divino, ma anche il fatto che egli resta pienamente libe-

ro e responsabile delle sue scelte; tuttavia, la sua ostinazione non potrà bloccare Dio che la integrerà nel suo progetto di salvezza (250). Es 13,17-15,21 per l'A. costituisce sia il finale di Es 1,1-15,21, sia l'inizio degli eventi di Es 15,22-19,40. Nell'uscita dall'Egitto e nel passaggio del Mar Rosso Dio assurge al rango di protagonista che muove tutti i fili dell'azione (276); nonostante per l'A. non si tratti di un racconto di "guerra santa", qui Dio spicca in tutto il suo potere di "guerriero", che assiste e trasforma Israele; il suo trionfo definitivo appare nella manifestazione della sua gloria, con la totale distruzione del nemico (che in realtà è autodistruzione). Queste caratteristiche, anticipate nella sequenza delle piaghe, confermano un Dio che non ammette rivali, la potenza assoluta ed invincibile della sua Parola e la sua epifania come l'unico, legittimo sovrano d'Israele; il Signore dispiega il suo potere trasformante di Creatore, ascoltando il grido del suo popolo, facendolo passare dal mondo della morte a quello della vita, e dotandolo di quella libertà necessaria ad essere un soggetto di diritto, per poter entrare finalmente in alleanza con Lui. Il Signore non solo opera la salvezza, ma rende capace Israele di comprenderla, configurandolo come un "essere per la libertà" (296).

Dalla seconda parte, l'A. seleziona solo l'unità climatica di Es 17,1-7. Dinanzi all'interrogativo di fondo "Il Signore è in mezzo a noi?" (17,7), Il Signore riconferma tutta la sua presenza gratuita e salvifica, pronta a risolvere ogni difficoltà d'Israele, indipendentemente da qualsiasi cogenza esterna, perché fedele a se stesso.

Dalla terza parte vengono trascelte tre significative unità. Nella prima (Es 19,1-24,11), l'A. si sofferma sul corpus legislativo ivi donato e sulla stipula finale dell'Alleanza; Dio si manifesta in tutta la sua potenza salvifica come fondamento di tutta la legislazione che propone ad un Israele libero. Nello statuto speciale espresso programmaticamente in Es 19,3-9, Dio si autoconsegna in modo totale e il rito dell'alleanza in Es 24,3-8 è la ratifica della sua proposta di comunione (326). Al Sinai Dio esige di essere rispettato come "Totalmente Altro" e "Totalmente coinvolto"; Egli non nega ad Israele la possibilità di conoscerlo, ma evidenza che la sua autodonzione dipende solo da Lui (349). Donando eccezionalmente il Decalogo, seguito dal Codice dell'Alleanza — dei quali l'A. delucida essenzialmente la singolarità rispetto ad altri codici dell'Antico Vicino Oriente (356-362) — Dio rivela la peculiarità del suo essere profondo, manifestandosi come Sovrano e Maestro del suo popolo, ma anche come "Dio Geloso" della propria identità e di quella d'Israele; Egli non si palesa mediante una apparizione fisica, bensì mediante una Parola, che va ascoltata ed accolta dall'Israele di ogni generazione. Nella seconda unità (Es 32,1-34,35), l'A. si sofferma sulla denuncia del peccato del vitello d'oro e sull'autorivelazione del nome misericordioso divino (Es 34,1-29) in cui si disvela la sproporzione tra il castigo e la misericordia, quest'ultima accordata in modo incondizionato e permanente. Dio fa suo il peccato d'Israele, evitando che la trasgressione del vitello paralizzi definitivamente il popolo in cammino verso la terra promessa, mediante il rinnovamento della sua alleanza eterna ed infrangibile (390-399). Di nuovo, Egli si offre come Dio distante, che non lascia vedere il suo volto, affidando l'incontro con Lui all'ascolto della sua Parola persino al suo rappresentante Mosè (409). La terza, breve unità

(40,34-38) tratta della Gloria divina che invade la Dimora, della sua inaccessibilità e della sua vicinanza sperimentabili nel culto, come tempo-spazio di nuova creazione e dell'incontro con Dio. La novità del Dio presente non più sul Sinai, ma nel Tabernacolo, risiede nel fatto che Egli rende attuale e perenne la rivelazione annunciata nel passaggio del Mar Rosso e al Sinai, a prescindere dall'accoglienza da parte d'Israele (416-417).

5) Nel capitolo IV "El Dios del Éxodo y el Dios del Antiguo Testamento" (419-426), l'A. riassume nel binomio "presenza/potere di Dio" le caratteristiche che configurano il Dio esodico ed analizza altri diversi testi del Primo Testamento, in cui compaiono tali caratteristiche. E' qui che l'A. sintetizza in fondo il percorso compiuto, proponendo il binomio vicinanza/distanza di Dio come possibile asse ermeneutico fondamentale delle varie caratteristiche di Dio nel libro dell'Esodo (424); "afirmar la presencia salvifica y generadora de Dios en favor de Israel y afirmar al mismo tiempo su distancia de él ponen de relieve que la presencia de Dios en medio de su pueblo es también expresión de la vida del propio Dios; cuando Dios se manifiesta como el *ser para Israel*, se manifiesta al mismo tiempo como el *ser para sí*. Así pues, Dios posee una propia identidad, distinta de Israel, que se manifiesta con claridad cuando se relaciona con él... En el relato del Éxodo el Dios cercano y distante se entrega a su pueblo por medio de una donación total. Dios no se guarda nada para sí cuando se entrega a Israel: ni su libertad, ni su poder, ni su superioridad...Según esto, cuanto más enraizado viva Israel en la acción liberadora y salvífica divina, más cercanos van a ser su vinculación y su contacto con el Dios distante; cuanto más respeto muestre por la cercanía de Dios, más respeto va a mostrar también por su lejanía" (425).

6) La monografia si chiude con una breve Conclusione, che accenna ulteriori piste di ricerca ed integrazioni (437-438), seguita da una copiosa Bibliografia (439-476).

Alcune osservazioni: se l'intuizione del tema non è originale, — come si evince dalla citazione di S.E. Balentine, *The Hidden God* (OTM; Oxford 1984) (423, n. 9) — inedito è il suo studio nel libro dell'Esodo; ciò lo rende prezioso non solo per gli studi riguardanti il libro omonimo, ma anche per la teologia biblica del Primo Testamento, sulla scia recentemente aperta di studi sui singoli personaggi della narrativa biblica (per quanto riguarda quello di Dio, rinviamo a W.L. Humphreys, *The Character of God in the Book of Genesis* [Louisville - London - Leiden 2001]). In tal senso, l'A. ha raggiunto egregiamente il compito prefissatosi, nei limiti da lui stesso tracciati. Forse sarebbe stato proficuo un maggior "asciugamento" del testo, specie nella coordinazione tra II e III capitolo, che avrebbe evitato diverse ripetizioni, così pure utile l'inserimento alla fine di un Indice analitico degli autori, dei passi biblici e dei temi cospicui citati. Visto l'approccio eminentemente narrativo a Dio come personaggio principale, risulta piuttosto scarso un approfondimento sulla tecnica in cui il narratore lo mette in scena; si pensi, ad es., alla differenza tra modalità diegetica e scenica nel modo in cui Dio viene presentato dal narratore, ma anche dagli altri personaggi: il Dio dipinto da Mosè, è diverso da quello prospettato da Faraone in Es 5, o addirittura da Aronne in Es 32! Per quanto riguarda la selezione degli studi nella rassegna del Capitolo I, notiamo, ad es., l'assenza vistosa di L. Alon-

so Schökel, *Esodo. Liberazione e salvezza* (Bologna 1997), come anche di J.W. Kuntz, *The Self-Revelation of God* (Philadelphia 1967), di J. Vermeylen, *El Dios de la Promesa y el Dios de la Alianza* (PTE 60; Santander 1990), quest'ultimo peraltro citato altrove (181, n. 26; 269, n. 49). Per quanto concerne la conclusione generale del Capitolo II, essa trascura completamente le linee salienti di Es 19–40 (cf. 147). Riguardo al Capitolo III, ci saremmo aspettati la scelta di un testo ineludibile come Es 6,1-8, in cui Dio ribadisce la novità della rivelazione del suo nome YHWH e si presenta sotto le significative immagini di *Gō'el* e Sposo d'Israele (cfr. J.L. Ska, «La place d'Ex 6,2-8 dans la narration de l'exode», ZAW 94 [1982] 530-548; idem, «Popolo sacerdotale e popolo dell'alleanza nell'Antico e Nuovo Testamento», *I Laici nel popolo di Dio* [a cura di V. Liberti] [SBTA; Roma 1990] 19-38). La valenza teofanica del fuoco in Es 3 forse andava ulteriormente approfondita, come pure quello di certi antropomorfismi divini (l'ira, il pentimento, la tenerezza viscerale, ecc.). Tra questi (a prescindere dalla sua lessicalizzazione) forse meritava attenzione quello della "faccia" (*pānim*) di Dio, un tema ricorrente nel viaggio dal Mar Rosso al Sinai, ed importante per illustrare il binomio "vicinanza/distanza"! Un'altra immagine decisiva, che ci sembra restare in ombra, è quella giudiziaria di Dio, che in Es 2,23-25 agisce come giudice in un processo trilaterale (*mišpāt*) dinanzi alla querela d'Israele oppresso dagli egiziani, mentre in Es 4,22-23 appare come parte lesa in una sorta di processo bilaterale (*rib*), in quanto Israele è il suo primogenito. Maggiore considerazione, forse avrebbe meritato anche l'immagine del Dio progettista minuzioso della sua Dimora nell'unità di Es 25–31. Spiace registrare parecchi errori e refusi; in particolare, segnaliamo la incoerenza nella traslitterazione dall'ebraico, la ripetuta confusione tra la 'alef e la 'ayin (cf. 99, n. 66; 164, n. 45; 198, n. 91) o la loro omissione (cf. 79, n. 6; 99, n. 66; 101, n. 73), l'assenza talora di segni diacritici (cf. 195, rr. 19-20); non sempre la citazione testuale di articoli in lingua straniera è corretta (cf. 93, n. 54; 184, n. 42; 361, n. 155). Tutto ciò non sminuisce un lavoro che apporta nuova linfa ai rami della comprensione del Dio dell'Esodo e ci aiuta a capire che di Lui "potremmo dire molte cose e mai finiremmo; ma per concludere: "Egli è tutto" (Sir 43,27).

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Joseph A. FITZMYER, *Tobit* (Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature). Berlin – New York, Walter de Gruyter, 2003. xviii-374 p. 16 × 23,5. €88,00

Sabíamos que Joseph A. Fitzmyer estaba preparando desde 1991 la edición de los fragmentos arameos y hebreos del libro de Tobit, encontrados en 1952 en la Cueva 4 de Qumrán. En 1995 apareció por fin la edición oficial de tales fragmentos (cf. *Qumran Cave 4: XIV. Parabiblical Texts, Part 2* [DJD 19; Oxford 1995] 1-76). Desde entonces no ha cesado Fitzmyer de publicar

estudios sobre el libro de Tobit (ver *Bibliografía general* 59 y 73). Por esto el comentario al libro de Tobit, que ahora presentamos, se puede considerar como la culminación de una tarea de años.

El A. nos ofrece un comentario al libro de Tobit según los parámetros generalmente aceptados en el género literario de los Comentarios bíblicos. El volumen de 374 páginas consta de dos partes principales: la *Introducción* (1-88) y el *Comentario* (89-338), con los complementos correspondientes, a saber, *Prefacio* (v-vii), *Contenido* (ix-x), *Abreviaturas* (xi-xviii) e *Índices* finales muy completos: de *Referencias* o *Citas* bíblicas y no bíblicas (339-361), de *Nombres* y *Materias* (362-366), de *Autores modernos* (367-374).

En las 88 páginas de la *Introducción* Fitzmyer expone su opinión particular acerca de las cuestiones generales del libro de Tobit, como son: los testimonios manuscritos del texto, especialmente los encontrados en la cueva 4ª de Qumrán, más las versiones griegas, latinas y otras (3-17); la lengua original (18-28); contenido y género literario (29-33); estilo y fuentes literarias (34-41); integridad (42-45); enseñanza del libro (46-49); fecha y lugar de composición (50-57); canonicidad (55-57); estructura (58) y una muy completa bibliografía general (59-88).

Con la mayoría de los comentaristas modernos Joseph A. Fitzmyer considera el libro de Tobit «a piece of fiction, a Jewish religious romance composed for an edifying and didactic purpose, with some references to historical events» (31). A la ficción literaria pertenece la localización de las dos familias protagonistas en la diáspora oriental, la de Tobías en Nínive y la de Sara en Ecbátana. La mezcla de estilos — narrativo, sapiencial, himnico, oracional, etc. — enriquece el valor literario de la obra, que tiene sus fuentes de inspiración en la rica tradición del pueblo judío y en su medio ambiente cultural. Sobre el tiempo de composición de Tobit Joseph A. Fitzmyer se inclina por el período entre 225 y 175 a.C. (52), opinión bastante extendida entre los autores. Entre los muchos lugares propuestos para su composición Joseph A. Fitzmyer prefiere Palestina, por el interés que el autor manifiesta por la tierra patria y por la restauración del templo de Jerusalén (54).

El tema más importante y trascendente de la *Introducción* es, sin duda, el del valor de los textos que nos han transmitido el libro de Tobit. En este punto nadie puede dudar de la autoridad de Joseph A. Fitzmyer, ya que él ha sido el editor de los fragmentos arameos y hebreos de Tobit, hallados en Qumrán. Por ellos sabemos que la comunidad de Qumrán utilizó el libro de Tobit en arameo y hebreo; dato importantísimo para calibrar el valor de los otros textos griegos y latinos del libro. El A. confiesa en el *Prefacio* (vi) que el ideal hubiera sido que su comentario se basara en los textos arameos y hebreos de Qumrán; pero, al ser éstos fragmentarios y escasos — apenas la quinta parte del libro de Tobit —, no había más remedio que echar mano de la recensión griega larga, del texto que nos ofrece el código Sinaitico (S = G<sup>II</sup> según R. Hanhart). Efectivamente, esta versión es la más antigua y la que mejor refleja el original semítico; por el contrario, la recensión del código Vaticano B (G<sup>I</sup> según R. Hanhart) es más corta que la anterior y de carácter secundario (4-6). De las versiones latinas la *Vetus* es muy afín al texto S, la *Vulgata* de san Jerónimo es poco fiable, parafrástica y libre (6-8).

En el *Comentario* Joseph A. Fitzmyer es consecuente con lo que acaba de decir en la *Introducción*; por esto da siempre la preferencia al texto griego

largo G<sup>II</sup>, adhiriéndose de esta manera a la sentencia cada día más aceptada. Pero en él presenta el A. una novedad muy original. Normalmente los autores ofrecen una *traducción*, en la que dan preferencia a uno de los textos griegos conocidos, sea el S o el B, sin por ello renunciar a cambiar de texto, según aconsejen las normas de la crítica textual. Joseph A. Fitzmyer ha optado por otra forma totalmente nueva. Al principio de cada perícopa propone no una sino dos versiones al inglés: en dos columnas paralelas, la primera corresponde al texto G<sup>II</sup> y la segunda al texto G<sup>I</sup> según la edición crítica de R. Hanhart. La visión sinóptica de las dos versiones ayuda al lector para observar las coincidencias y las diferencias entre un texto y otro. El A. se vale de otro recurso gráfico de gran importancia: cuando una palabra o una frase de la primera columna, de G<sup>II</sup>, corresponde a los textos arameos o hebreos de Qumrán, va en letra cursiva; si está entre paréntesis, es una variante o una adición de los mismos textos. Así que, con sólo prestar atención al texto impreso, ya se puede saber lo que contienen, no contienen y cómo lo contienen los textos “qumránicos” (cf. 89).

Después de la traducción a dos columnas de los textos G<sup>II</sup> y G<sup>I</sup> el A. ofrece un *Comentario* muy breve, en el que centra la perícopa correspondiente en el conjunto de la acción global del libro. A este *Comentario* siguen las *Notas* al texto G<sup>II</sup>, que constituyen el verdadero comentario exegético al libro de Tobit. Joseph A. Fitzmyer pone al servicio de estas *Notas* el inmenso bagaje cultural que él ha acumulado durante los años de estudio de los textos de Qumrán.

El método de trabajo que Joseph A. Fitzmyer aplica en las *Notas* es férreo de principio a fin. Encabeza siempre *en cursiva* el texto de cada verso de G<sup>II</sup>, dividido en sentencias cortas. En el caso de que dispongamos del texto arameo o hebreo del pasaje, éste es aducido inmediatamente después de la versión del texto griego G<sup>II</sup>, acompañado de traducción, según la edición oficial y crítica del mismo Joseph A. Fitzmyer. Se advierte que los textos de Qumrán concuerdan generalmente con G<sup>II</sup>. Prosigue una comparación vocablo a vocablo de G<sup>II</sup> con el texto paralelo G<sup>I</sup> y con la VL, de la que se ofrece el texto latino y su versión al inglés. El estudio comparativo es minucioso, escrupuloso, de tal manera que el lector es informado en todo momento de los puntos en que el texto G<sup>I</sup> está conforme o discrepa del texto base G<sup>II</sup>, de la conformidad casi literal de la VL con G<sup>II</sup>, y, en su caso, de las variantes, añadiduras u omisiones. Joseph A. Fitzmyer aduce también el testimonio poco fiable de la Vg, a mi entender por el gran respeto que le merece su autor, san Jerónimo, y por haber sido el texto oficial de la Iglesia latina durante tantos siglos.

Después de todas estas observaciones a los textos del libro de Tobit Joseph A. Fitzmyer explica el sentido que el autor ha querido dar a los mismos, aduciendo pasajes del AT que ciertamente los iluminan. Las notas a pie de página, además de confirmar la opinión defendida en el texto, añaden puntos de vista de otros muchos expertos modernos, como consta en la escogida bibliografía especializada que allí se cita.

Joseph A. Fitzmyer hace referencia, sin duda, a algunos recursos literarios del autor de Tobit, por ejemplo, a la ironía, la cual se encuentra «when there are two levels of understanding, that of the actor and that of the observer or reader» (35), y tiene lugar en todo el relato, especialmente en las intervenciones de Rafael/Azarías (ver 35, 102, 130, 184, 191, 194, 196, 199,



241, 247 y 261). Todavía nos hubiera gustado que el A. hiciera más hincapié en algún otro aspecto literario del libro, como es, por ejemplo, en el de la estructura y disposición de las partes. Señalamos algunos pasajes concretos, que ofrecen claras oportunidades para ello, y el A. o no les presta atención o lo hace muy superficialmente. En Tob 1,3-3,17 los dos protagonistas, Tobit y Sara, son presentados en dos cuadros perfectamente paralelos, a pesar de la distancia, con un punto de referencia común y trascendente: “ante la gloria de Dios” (3,16); en la oración de Tobit (130); en la técnica quiástica que aparece con claridad en el texto G<sup>II</sup> de Tob 6,13 y que G<sup>I</sup> destruye lastimosamente porque no la ha captado; por último, en la intención expresa del autor de cerrar con 14,15 el círculo que había comenzado en 1,1-3: a la deportación de Israel al país de los asirios corresponde la destrucción del imperio asirio y la deportación de sus habitantes.

De todas formas, y por encima de todo, la presente obra de Joseph A. Fitzmyer debe ser recibida con aplauso por los estudiosos de la Biblia, pues ella va a señalar en adelante un hito muy significativo en los estudios relacionados con el libro de Tobit.

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## Novum Testamentum

John S. KLOPPENBORG VERBIN, *Excavating Q. The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel*. Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 2000, xiii-546 p. 15 × 23. \$32.00.

This extensive book on the Q-document comprises two major parts: 1. “text and history”, 2. “theology and ideology”. The first part deals with the methodological questions concerning the so-called two-source theory (in this book: “two document hypothesis” = “2DH”) of the Synoptic Gospels. In this part four major themes are discussed: source-critical, document-critical, redaction-critical, and society-critical examinations of the 2DH. While the first three topics deal with rather common themes of the Q problem (Chapters 1-3), the last one represents new sociological horizons arising from recent scholarship (Chapters 4-5).

A quick summary: Chapter 1 (“Q and the Synoptic Problem”) presents a detailed, but nicely illustrated, discussion about why the 2DH is the most plausible hypothesis for the Synoptic Problem. After amply handling all conceivable possibilities, including the solution advocated by J.J. Griesbach and the one by A.M.Farrer/M.D.Goulder, the author opts for the 2DH. The Q-

Document is certainly a mere hypothesis, but it is probably the best hypothesis, for “good hypotheses are those that are judged to offer the most economical and most plausible account of the largest number of data” (54).

Chapter 2 (“The Character and Reconstruction of Q”) illuminates the points pertaining to the reconstruction of the Q Document: Q was a single written document, composed in Greek, attaining its final form “slightly after the events of 70CE” (87). The original order is mostly preserved in Luke (beginning with Q3,3, ending with Q22,28-30). The author chooses not to entertain the possibility of multiple recensions of Q in accordance with the premise of the International Q Project. I personally think that it is inevitable to postulate Q-Matthew and Q-Luke, but the author judges: “In Sato’s case ... the appeal to QMatt and QLuke functions as a way to handle material that does not easily fit into his compositional theory for Q” (110) — which, I am afraid, is arguing rather unfairly after the result is known.

In Chapter 3 (“The Composition and Genre of the Sayings Gospel Q”) the problem of the redaction of Q is taken up. The author first tries to point out the “major redactional structures in Q” with the help of some “recurring motifs” (coming judgment, the story of Lot, deuteronomistic theology) and the signs of progressive argumentation (118-128). These seem to be the elements fairly widely acknowledged by the Q scholarship as indications of the redactional activities in Q — except the “Lot” motif, which still cannot convince many scholars including myself. Then the author moves on to a “diachronic approach to the redaction” of Q, a part in which my own view (M. SATO, *Q und Prophetie. Studien zur Gattungs- und Traditionsgeschichte der Quelle Q* [WUNT 2. Reihe 29; Tübingen 1988]) is first critiqued and then the author’s own theory of two-layer redaction is presented: Q1, “the formative stratum” with mainly six clusters of “instructions”, and Q2, “the main redaction”, which combined those groups of hortatory sayings into a larger *chreiai*-collection (followed by subsequent additions: Q4,1-13; Q11,42c; 16,17). The author’s view is the representation of the concept in his earlier book (J.S. KLOPPENBORG, *The Formation of Q. Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections* [Studies in Antiquity & Christianity; Philadelphia 1987]) — the view now very widely accepted especially in North American circles. The lack of space for the present review allows me only to say that my own position that permits “unsystematic additions” still has many positive points in comparison with the author’s conceptually simplified two-layer system.

In Chapter 4 (“The Q Document and the Q People”) the author endeavors to socially visualize those who formed the Q Document. They should be termed rather as the “Q group” or “Q people” (instead of “Q community”), perhaps “a network of villages sympathetic to Jesus’ kingdom message or a subculture or counterculture within the larger towns and cities of the Lower Galilee” (171). More concretely, Q1 was created by “the lower scribal sector of towns and villages” (195), which fosters “a degree of disenfranchisement with local judicial mechanisms” (198); Q2, “associated with towns sufficiently large to have markets and a small scribal sector” (204), should also be ascribed to the scribal activities. Q3 (the last additions) suggests likewise a provenance from a scribal layer (213), which, because of its use of the Torah, could be “somewhat higher and more learned than that evidenced in either Q1 or Q2” (213). On the other hand, the role of the itinerant preachers is minimized in

contrast to the high assessment of their role upheld by e.g. G. Theissen ("Wanderradikalisten"), P. Hoffmann, and myself (179-184).

Coupled with this chapter is the next Chapter 5 ("Reading Q in the Galilee"), where the author first gives an extensive account of recent research into the ethnographic, sociological, religio-political, economic and related aspects of the Galilean region (215-255). The Galilee was put under Hasmonean-Judean control after 104 BCE, but even afterwards the land as a whole, with the exception of large cities (Sepphoris, Tiberias), remained largely indigenous, with little substantial connection with the Jerusalem Temple and its statutes (tax system, purity rules, priestly courses, etc.). However, in the country there were also the pressures of urbanization; especially the gradual monetization of the economy made many small landholders go under, while large landowners — many of whom being absentee landlords — fattened themselves all the more. Then the author tries to "read" Q in the Galilee thus depicted. "Q's discourse on the kingdom of God represents resistance to the imposition of a political and economic culture that would benefit urban elites at the expense of the small producers" (261). "Q is thus engaged in a struggle on two fronts: in support of town and village culture against the encroachments of the cities, and in support of local forms of Israelite religion in the face of pressures from the hierocratic worldview of Judaea" (261).

This is a significant view which could be further developed in the future. I might add one more thing that should have been discussed seriously: the question of language. Why was the Document Q, having its roots in the lower layers of town scribes and the similar social level, written in Greek? What was the language situation among the non-urban population in Galilee, and how does it fit harmoniously with the concept of the group and the document thus described?

Ordinary books on Q would probably come to an end at this point. In the author's case, however, this simply marks the end of the first part. In fact, one of the unique characteristics of the composition of the present book is that its second part envisages the same problems as those in the first part from quite different angles: theological or ideological perspectives concerning research on Q. Therefore, Chapter 6 — corresponding to Chapter 1 which dealt with source criticism — tries to uncover the theological preoccupations which activated the quest of the Synoptic source problem. The point of departure of this research movement was "the collapse of confidence in Protestant orthodoxy and its naïve assumption that dogmatic statements could be derived from the biblical text. ... The architect of this collapse was Hermann Samuel Reimarus" (272-273). And the result: "Though it originated as a theological problem, the Synoptic Problem, with its array of literary-critical observations, soon came to deconstruct the theological solutions it was initially thought to sustain" (325). In order to substantiate this view the author goes into an elaborate report on the research history of the Synoptic Problem in the past two centuries.

Chapter 7 ("Putting Q on the Map"), which corresponds to Chapter 2, discusses the theological context in which the reconstruction of Q has been carried out, spotlighting in the end the relevance of the reconstruction by the International Q Project. The final remark is noteworthy: "Q tells in the first place about one particular sector of the Jesus movement, its literary and

theological expressions, and its eventual transformation in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. To be sure, Q is an important source for the historical Jesus, but it is only one of several" (352).

Chapter 8 ("Making Differences"), a counterpart of Chapter 3, deals with the key impact that the Q quest has had on New Testament theology. Here I cite only one part which illustrates the author's view: "On the one hand, Q's theological 'differentness' on the key *theologoumena* [italic original] of the cross and resurrection are regularly seen to endanger some presumed unity of primitive Christian thinking ... On the other hand, Q represents a chink in the armor of the view that has been promoted in various guises, that apocalyptic eschatology was a theological foundation either for Jesus' own preachment ... or for that of the post-Easter church ... It also raises serious questions about the way in which eschatology, not simply as a descriptive historical category but as a theological category, has been allowed to control discourse on early Christianity" (398). Then the author goes on to maintain that Q is to be called — in a "provocative" or "argumentative" way (403.407) — a "Gospel", therefore: "Sayings Gospel Q".

I basically agree that "modern scholarship on Q thus endangers the notion of a stable and consistent theological core" (398). I would not agree, however, to the mainly North American naming "Sayings Gospel Q". "Gospel" as a designation of a literary category is, to my mind, a *narrative* ranging from the appearance of Jesus to his death and resurrection (a subtype of *vita*). This does not apply to Q, even with the vaguely biographical traits of Q. That there are a few Gnostic, non-narrative works that are given the name of "Gospel" ("Gospel according to Thomas", "Gospel according to Philip", "Gospel of Truth", etc.) derives from their provocative intention to challenge the concept of the "gospel"/good news advocated by the Great Church, and ought not to be imported into the discussion of literary category here. If "a coherent theological perspective and thus capable of standing alone" (403, quote from A.D. Jacobson) is used to be the hallmark of a "Gospel", many more works can be called "Gospels": "Gospel of Paul to the Galatians", "Gospel of James", "Gospel of the Apocalyptic John", "Gospel of Didache" — you name it.

The last chapter (Chapter 9: "Social Characterizations in Theological Perspective") deals once again (cf. Chapters 4 and 5) with the social and historical setting of Q. The author draws a relevant consequence: "[Q], insofar as it represents a formulation of a rather déclassé social stratum and insofar as it differs notably in its shape from formulations that derived from urban, wealthier, social locations (Pauline letters), provides an excellent site at which to examine the relation between social location and ideological commitment" (416). And he exposes a hidden psychology of many New Testament scholars: "... at least some of the resistance to the social-historical treatment of Q and other documents of the Jesus movement seems to derive from the fear that it will evacuate or render questionable theological applications" (420).

In the end the author discusses the proposition that Q is "cynic-like" (advocated mainly by F.G. Downing, L.F. Vaage, B.L. Mack), or rather, the voices that attack this seemingly aberrant view and their theological background. The author points out "that the reaction to the cynic hypothesis seems as much moved by theological worries as by concerns for a defensible social-historical reconstruction. These are ... worries that a cynic-like Jesus cannot be seen

to be in plausible continuity with the exalted Lord of later christological confessions. Such concerns are not historical but theological" (440).

As a conclusion the author maintains: Q "is different enough on several registers to be able to prompt rethinking and renovation of some of the conceptual apparatus of the discipline" (446).

The work is thus a wide-ranging, detailed, and thorough "introduction" to the problems of Q. An enormous amount of literature has been incorporated and evaluated. No matter how much one is inclined to agree or disagree with the author's views, no future research on Q could be effectively carried out without engaging in a dialogue with this impressive work.

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LUC DEVILLERS, O.P., *La fête de l'Envoyé. La section johanniques de la fête des Tentés (Jean 7,1-10,21) et la christologie (EB 49)*. Paris, J. Gabalda et C<sup>ie</sup>, 2002. 589 p. 16 × 24. €75,00

This study is an adventuresome and creative contribution to contemporary Johannine studies. Originally a doctoral dissertation defended at the *École Biblique* in 2001, the work has three major parts. The first section is devoted to a history of the development of the Feast of Tabernacles and a study of the use and meaning of Gihon and/or Siloam. The second is an important contribution to the debate over the use of "the Jews" in the Gospel of John. In order to avoid the problematic use of "the Jews" in his text, he uses the expression the *Ioudaioi*, respecting the difference between the Johannine readers and the canonical readers. The final section is a study of John 7–10.

The overview of the history and development of the feast of Tabernacles is comprehensive, although I was surprised by Deviller's claim that there has been little done on the history and theology of the feast (29-30). His own treatment is heavily dependent upon three recent studies (J.L. Rubenstein, *The History of Sukkot in the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods* [BJS 302; Atlanta 1995]; R. Vicent, *La fiesta judía de las Cabañas (Sukkot)* [Biblioteca Midrásica 17; Estella 1995]; H. Ulfsgard, *The Story of Sukkot. The Setting, Shaping, and Sequel of the Biblical Feast of Tabernacles* [BGBE 34; Tübingen 1998]). He was fortunate to have such well-documented discussion partners. Vicent should not be regarded as part of the "Spanish exegetical school" (30, n. 5), whatever that means. He has been a professor in Rome for over twenty years, and his study is the fruit of a doctoral dissertation, completed under the direction of R. Le Déaut at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome.

The importance of the pool in the story of the man born blind (John 9,7.11), leads Devillers to an analysis of an ambiguous "spring of Jerusalem" and its association with Tabernacles. A search through 1 Kgs 1,33-45, 2 Chr 32,30; 33,14, Sir 24,27, Jer 2,13.18 and Isa 8,6 points to an association between Siloam, Gihon and a life-giving water that flows in Jerusalem.

Linking Bethzatha (John 5) and Siloam (John 9), and adding the witness of the Fathers and medieval pilgrims, Devillers claims that a tradition existed associating the life-giving waters of Gihon with the pool of Jerusalem: Siloam. These links are the result of over-subtle reading of very scarce evidence, some textual re-management, the suggestion that in an earlier redaction of the Gospel, the Bethzatha pool of John 5 belonged to John 9 (see also L. Devillers, "Une piscine peut en cacher un autre. À propos de Jean 5,1-9a", *RB* 106 [1999] 175-205). Many will find them unconvincing. This, however, is but the first of some surprising suggestions concerning Siloam.

Devillers points out that the Fourth Evangelist must not be regarded as anti-Semitic. He insists that some form of exclusion of the Johannine Christians was in place before the appearance of the Fourth Gospel, and that the implementation of the *Birkat ha-Minim* at Javneh was part of the process reflected in the unique Johannine use of ἀποσυνάγωγος. A survey of the question of the *Ioudaioi* follows. Devillers presents three approaches: those who have attempted to identify a historical group behind the expression, those who regard the expression is purely symbolic, and those who regard the expression as part of the narrative strategy of the story-teller that does not call for a historical localization. Devillers suggests that the narrative critics are correct in identifying the *Ioudaioi* as part of the narrative strategy of the story-teller, but that an attempt must be made to identify the world *outside the text* that generated the use of this particular expression for such a strategy.

Devillers sides with the narrative-critical conclusions of Gérard Caron (*Qui sont les "Juifs" de l'évangile de Jean* [Recherches 35; Québec 1997]), that they are a "certain type of Jew". Insisting on the need to identify the group historically, he follows Urban von Wahlde's identification of the *Ioudaioi* with the high priests, the leaders and the authorities (cf., among many studies, U. Von Wahlde, "The Jews in the Gospel of John: Fifteen Years of Research [1983-1998]", *ETL* 76 (2000) 30-55). Aware, however, that von Wahlde's theories of redaction have not won the day, Devillers applies himself to a careful study of the relevant texts that he carefully groups. Of the 71 texts, many are descriptive (2,6; 3,1; 18,20; 19,20. 21a.40). All the Johannine naming of the "feasts of the *Ioudaioi*" are simply descriptive (2,13; 5,1; 6,4; 7,2; 19,14.31.42). Jesus' being the King of the *Ioudaioi* (18,33.39; 19,3.19.21b) is a positive use of the expression, and should not be drawn into the debate.

Close analysis of the polemical uses of the expression, the interrogation of John the Baptist, the Sabbath debate (5,1-18; 9,1-41), and the extensive plot of the *Ioudaioi* against Jesus, all lead to the association of the expression with the high priests and the Jewish leaders. Some ambiguous uses remain (11,1-12,8; 8,31), but the positive use of 4,22 must be given its full importance, and points to the positive interpretation of the *Ioudaioi* in John 11 and 8,32. As he eliminates the complex mixture of "the crowd" and the *Ioudaioi* in ch. 6 as a later redactional addition to an original Gospel, only two groups of sayings not associated with the Jewish leaders must be explained. The feasts of the *Ioudaioi* can be explained as purely descriptive, in the light of the *Letter of Soumaïos*, a recently discovered letter from the Bar Kochba period, as reconstructed by Devillers with the help of É. Puech. He reads it as clear evidence of an outsider's non-judgmental description of the practices of the Jews during the celebration of Tabernacles (see also L.

Devillers, "La Lettre de Soumaïos et les Ioudaioi johanniques", *RB* 105 [1998] 556-581). The second group of difficult sayings speaks of "fear of the Jews" (7,13; 9,22; 19,38; 20,19). This difficult collection of *Ioudaioi* sayings, according to Devillers, depends directly upon the expression of LXX Esth 8,17: διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ιουδαίων (see John 7,13; 19,38; 20,29; see also LXX Esth 9,2 and John 9,22). Devillers provides a subtle and skillful discussion of the development of the Esther text. The basic question that will be raised to this explanation of those texts that tell of "fear of the Jews" is the different contexts of the passage in Esth 8 and the suggested Johannine parallels. The identical verbal expression is striking, but the expression in Esther reflects the delight of the author as the tables have been turned against those who had earlier supported the extermination of the Jews.

By a process of classification and elimination, supported by some learned and subtle work with the *Letter of Soumaïos* (the feasts of the *Ioudaioi*) and Esth 8,17 (fear of the *Ioudaioi*), all the negative *Ioudaioi* sayings refer to the high priests and the leaders of the Jews in the story of Jesus, i.e. the Pharisees in the experience of the Johannine community. As well as his use of the *Letter of Soumaïos* and Esth 8,17, which I find interesting, but ultimately unconvincing, there is a further issue that bothered me. The pool of John 5 can be drawn into the debate over Siloam because in an earlier redaction it belonged to John 9. However, the confused shift from "the people" to the *Ioudaioi* across John 6 (see the turning point at 6,41), should not be brought into the discussion because it belongs to a later redaction. Is this consistent argument? It is the final, *canonical* edition of the Johannine text that generates the contemporary problem of the *Ioudaioi*. The enigma has not been solved, but Devillers must be applauded for his attempt to explain the historical situation that generated the literary and theological use of the expression.

The study of John 7-10 follows. Devillers considers the overall message of 7,1-52 by commenting on the passage in sections (vv. 1-2, 3-9, 10-13, 14-36, 37-52). These comments are helpful, and focus the reader's attention upon central christological issues, but does this division indicate the literary and theological structure of 7,1-52? This is neither claimed nor argued. In this 31 page study of a difficult Johannine text, Devillers devotes 11 pages to a detailed study of the text critical problem in v. 1, and 6 pages to an excellent study of the Johannine use of πῶθεν. In the remaining 17 pages, the flow of the argument across John 7 as a whole, and its link with John 8, are somewhat lost from view. The following chapter is dedicated to a study of 7,37-39. He punctuates vv. 37b-38 as presenting the source of living water as Christ. He makes a good case for the Scriptural background to the passage as Zech 14,8, read in the light of Exod 17,6, and links the passage strongly with the liturgy of Tabernacles. The question of "the last day" need not be given an exact date, as it is more eschatological than part of the seven or eight days of the feast. This fine study of John 7,37-39 is an important contemporary contribution to a difficult discussion.

The reading of John 8 offers a cursive reading of the text, identifying Isaianic background, including the Targum to Isaiah, as background to major elements in the passage. This background, for example, clarifies the difficult use of τὴν ἀρχὴν in v. 25 as a reference to pre-existence and also to Jesus' ongoing presence until now, and the regular use of ἐγώ εἰμι across John 8 (see

vv. 24, 28, 58) as an indication of Jesus' divine origins. These are the issues that generate the conflict between Jesus and the leaders in the story, reflecting the conflicts between the Johannine believers and the *Ioudaioi*/Pharisees of the time of the Johannine community. Already within Jewish thought (e.g. Second Isaiah, *Jubilees*, earlier traditions found in the later *Targum to Isaiah*) Jesus' claims had been foreshadowed. There is no rejection of the traditions of Israel or of the *Ioudaioi* in this heated debate. John 8,28 promises them life, and even the fierce polemic of the vv. 39-47 has Jewish background. However, the *Ioudaioi* remain closed within their religious system, despite the promise. The feast of Tabernacles provides background for Jesus' self-proclamation as "the light," and the summons to recognize the one true God, and the Son whom he has sent.

Two chapters are dedicated to John 9. The first is a more conventional reading of the passage, highlighting the journey of faith of the man born blind, and the move into darkness of the *Ioudaioi*/Pharisees. There are, however, several unique features to his reading of the passage. The mention of "Sabbath" in v. 14 is not linked with Sabbath legislation, but continues the theme of 7,37-39, the last great day of the feast. Along with other uses of "sevens" in the Fourth Gospel (and some interesting cases are uncovered by Devillers), he accepts a seven-fold chiasmic structure, although aware that no structure is perfect. This is particularly the case here, as the text developed from an original account (vv. 1, 6, 7) to its present form during the conflicts between the Johannine community and the *Ioudaioi*/Pharisees. The cured man's use of ἐγώ εἰμι in v. 9 has a double meaning: it identifies the man, but also associates him with Jesus, who has earlier revealed himself with the use of this expression. The Old Testament (Isa 42,6-7; 49,6 [Suffering Servant]; Jer 13,15-17 [ironic use of "give glory to God"]) and a broad cross-section of Wisdom and Qumran material (on true and false knowledge) provide background to the passage. The *Ioudaioi* are not condemned, but offered sight, and in 10,19-21 some will recognize that he is the Suffering Servant who opens the eyes of the blind.

After surveying the possible messianic understanding of the waters of Siloam, the second chapter is almost entirely dedicated to arguing that the interpretation of "Siloam" as "the Sent One" in v. 7 is derived from traditions that lie behind the interpretation of Siloam as "the sent one" in the *Life of Isaiah* from the *Lives of the Prophets*. Devillers is aware that scholars generally regard the *Life of Isaiah* as posterior to John, the result of Christian redaction. He argues that the traditions behind the *Lives of the Prophets* are pre-Christian. According to the *Life of Isaiah*, after his martyrdom, Isaiah was laid to rest at a water passage that led the spring of Gihon to the south of the city. He asked for drink, and God provided for him from this spring. From that moment the spring became a miraculous source of life-giving water for the people, a gift of God. That is why it is called Siloam, which is to be interpreted "the sent one" (διὰ τοῦτο ἐκλήθη Σιλόαμ, ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται ἀπεσταλμένος [*Life of Isaiah* 1.2]). Despite the widespread use of πέμπω and ἀποστέλλω, in various verbal forms, to refer to Jesus' being the "Sent One" of the Father in the Fourth Gospel, only in 9,7 is Jesus is called ὁ ἀπεσταλμένος. For Devillers, the celebration of the feast of Tabernacles, so closely associated with the waters of Siloam, under the influence of the



tradition found in the *Life of Isaiah*, is a crucial articulation of the Johannine Christology of Jesus as the life-giving "Sent one."

A study of John 10 leads to further original claims. The key to a reading of 10,1-21 is the use of ἀλλή, rather than ἐπαυλις to speak of the sheep-fold. Devillers reads this as a symbolic reference to the temple, and situates the passage within the Johannine conflict with traditional Israel. The Good Shepherd leads the true flock, which may be traumatized by its experience of rejection, away from the temple precincts into another pasture. There he offers the original Jewish Christian community, and all others not of this flock (Greeks and Samaritans) a pasture of salvation. The Good Shepherd perfects the role of the Davidic shepherd Messiah, but only through a noble death and resurrection. The section closes (v. 21) with the *Ioudaioi*/Pharisees recognizing that Jesus is the messianic Servant from Isaiah, who opens the eyes of the blind (Isa 42,6-7). Despite Devillers' insistence that vv. 22-42 belong to Tabernacles (rather than a self-standing section devoted to Dedication), he devotes only 6 pages to select verses in the passage, seeking to affirm what he has already claimed for 10,1-21: the messianic question emerges, and Jesus answers it in terms of the Isaian Servant. Crucial exegetical issues are overlooked here: the identity between Jesus and the Father in 10,30.38, the debate of vv. 31-38, and the use of the verb ἀγιάζω, particularly appropriate for Dedication, in v. 36.

Jesus' origins and the authority that he receives from such origins certainly lie at the heart of the debates that dominate John 7-10. Devillers' work has thrown this fact into even greater relief, and his pages on the background to Tabernacles, the *Ioudaioi*, John 7,37-39, and the rich Isaian background to the Gospel, must be attended to by all Johannine scholars. However, as I have indicated in my description of the study, it is studded with a number of questionable theories. Such issues as the original text of 7,1.52 and 9,28-29a, traditions widely accepted as post-Christian (e.g. Targums, Rabbinic and other Jewish material), and the later tradition history of the passage play crucial roles in his interpretation. There is an inconsistent use of the tradition history of certain passages to either sustain or reject certain arguments (e.g. the tradition history of John 5 and John 6; his work on John 9 is too brief to be helpful [e.g., was *every element* in the present 9,1-41 added to the original vv. 1,6,7 *on one occasion*?]). Doctoral dissertations strain to draw as much grist as is possible into their mill. Devillers has more grist than he needs for his case. Yet I missed, in this diachronic search for Old Testament and Jewish parallels and for the history of the tradition, a detailed reading of the passages *as they are found in their present Johannine context*. But maybe that is the next task for the author.

The *École Biblique* has long been served by an outstandingly creative Johannine scholar: M.-É. Boismard. There is much from the tradition of Boismard in this dissertation: textual decisions on the basis of the Patristic witness (especially Chrysostom), the easy use of possible parallels from a wide spectrum of Jewish and Christian literature, and creative suggestions concerning the historical development of the Johannine text. A doctoral dissertation is the beginning of an academic career, not the end of one. Devillers has demonstrated outstanding skills in his first major contribution to Johannine scholarship. Many will take exception to some of his suggestions

concerning the background and meaning of John 7–10. However, contemporary Johannine scholarship has been enriched by this creative and penetrating study, and the contemporary Johannine scholarly community has been enriched by the emergence of this fine scholar.

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Eckhard J. SCHNABEL, *Urchristliche Mission*. Wupertal, R. Brockhaus Verlag, 2002. xxxii-1806 p. 15 x 21,5

The author of this monumental work on the 1<sup>st</sup> century Christian mission has taught New Testament exegesis and theology at the Asia Theological Seminary in Manila, as well as in Germany. Since 1988 he has been Professor of New Testament at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield/Chicago. He has numerous publications in English and German.

In his preface (v-x), Schnabel locates the origin of the book in Christians' abiding interest in the original mission of the Church as a reference for mission today. On the other hand, they need to avoid unreflecting, naïve and romantic views. Earlier writers have dealt with the topic, especially Adolf von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Leipzig 1924, repr. 1965). It is now time for a new book on the 1<sup>st</sup> cent. even if, perhaps, the subject is too vast for one writer. S. wants to be read not only by colleagues and clergy, but also by "interested laity".

After a detailed table of contents (xi-xxi), a list of abbreviations (xxiii-xxix) and of illustrations (xxxi-xxxii), S. writes a long Introduction in which he asks the question that his book seeks to answer: How did the mission to the Gentiles come about? And on a worldwide scale? And within two generations? (7-8). He presents his sources (9-41). They are, in first place, the texts of the New Testament: Acts, Paul, the Gospels as written by active missionaries. He brings to these a fundamental trust, which does not, however, exempt from the need to engage with more critical approaches. He will also make use of the non-canonical Acts of the Apostles, as often containing information of historical value (21-36). With particular reference to Acts, this book, he believes, was written by an eyewitness, at least of Paul's journeys, not long after the events narrated, and so is a "first-class primary source for the description of early Christianity" (33). These positions can be discussed, but they are presented with commendable frankness and consistency. This reviewer welcomes S.'s critical use of the non-canonical Acts. Besides the New Testament and related texts, S. deploys a very rich documentation, both literary and documentary, that makes his book a mine of information, even for those who may not share all his views.

The 35 chapters of the book, each with divisions and subdivisions, are organised in seven principal parts. The titles of these parts are: I. Promise – Israel's eschatological expectation and early Jewish expansion (57-175); II. Fulfilment – the mission of Jesus (177-378); III. Beginnings – the mission of

the Twelve in Jerusalem (379-539); IV. Break up – the mission of the Twelve from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (541-883); V. Pioneer Mission – the mission of the apostle Paul (885-1424); VI. Growth – consolidation and challenges of the communities (1425-1474); VII. Result – self-understanding, praxis and message of the early Christian mission (1474-1527). Frequent syntheses help the reader to keep track of the exposition. In this review I shall try to give an idea of S.'s principal arguments and conclusions on these topics, together with some comments. There is a valuable appendix of illustrations (1529-1567), in fact all maps and plans, followed by a bibliography (1569-1679) and by the usual indexes.

In the first part, S. concludes that Israel's faith always had universal elements, most clearly expressed in the prophets. On the other hand, it had no idea of an "aggressive" Gentile mission: any conversion of the Gentiles to YHWH was for the last days. Therefore the missionary activity of the first Christians can be explained neither from precedents in the Old Testament nor from models of early Jewish mission. I would share this view.

The second part deals with the mission of Jesus, including those of the Twelve and of the Seventy-two. S. believes that Jesus did not seek contact with non-Jews, or polytheists, but nor did he consistently avoid it. On the other hand, Jesus did announce the fulfilment of God's promises, which included salvation for the nations. The formal mission to the Gentiles comes after his resurrection (Matt 28,18-20, etc.). On the other hand, according to S., the early Christian mission among non-Jews has its roots in a commission from Jesus during his earthly life. S. bases his conclusion in part on what he presumes to have been Jesus' own ideas about the matter. This is debatable territory.

He also claims that, "In the primitive community the Gentile mission as such was never controversial. There were debates only over the status of the converted pagans and over the practical relations between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. There is no indication that it was discussed in Jerusalem whether one must actively evangelise Gentiles, or whether one should better wait for the Gentiles to come to Jerusalem of their own accord, as the prophets promise. The persuasion that one can reach the problematic Samaritans, Ethiopians en route, polytheists in Antioch, Rome and many other regions with the gospel of Jesus Christ, goes back to Jesus ... The universal and international mission of the Jesus-believers, an innovation in religious and spiritual history, was initiated and impelled by Jesus" (378).

Here I must part company with S. If he is right, how can we account for Peter's response to the invitation to visit the Roman centurion Cornelius at Caesarea (Acts 10,1-11,18)? At no stage in his reflections does he refer to a commission, even implicit, of the pre-Paschal Jesus to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. Rather, as I read the narrative, the Holy Spirit is directing him to do something new and unprecedented, to which he is not spontaneously inclined. At the heart of Peter's hesitations, as well as of "debates over the status of the converted pagans and over the practical relations between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians" (378), lay unresolved questions concerning the Covenant as well as problems of purity.

From Jesus the Twelve learned to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed

in towns and villages, without regard to the status of persons. After Easter came the commission not to restrict their activity to Jews, but to take the Gospel "to all nations" and "to the ends of the earth". They would not have understood this as meaning only the boundaries of the Roman Empire. They would have thought also in terms of the Diaspora to the east (Babylonia, Persia, Parthia). But there are even further horizons: the "Ethiopian" of Acts 8 (south), the Scythians of Col 3 (north), Spain in Rom 15 (west), even – why not? – India (east).

Did Jesus' apostles follow a strategic plan? (424-536). As S. points out, strategic thinking and tactical considerations were not unknown in Antiquity, especially in the military realm, and, in their commonest form, were relevant for the international mission of the Jerusalem Christians. Geographical and ethnographic information was available to them, at least theoretically, in libraries and archives, but also from dealings with Jews and others from different parts of the world. This is no doubt true and may have influenced this or that missionary choice. On the other hand, the Book of Acts does rather give the impression that the initial spread of the Gospel outside Jerusalem was a result of persecution dispersing a group that otherwise showed little inclination to engage in missionary activity. For S., the early Church tradition of a "Missionary conference" of the apostles, who decide to what part of the world each should go, could contain a kernel of historical truth (512-518).

For S., there is no parallel in the ancient world for the concrete project of an internationally operating society or organisation in the religious, philosophical or political domain. He shows (521-531) that the propagation of cults or of philosophies (e.g. the Cynic) does not offer a true parallel to the Christian mission.

The fourth part deals with the mission of the Twelve from Jerusalem to the end of the earth. Greek-speaking Jewish Christians in Jerusalem seem to have been the first to grasp and express the consequences of the death and resurrection of the Messiah for the identity of God's people Israel: God's salvation is no longer concentrated exclusively on Israel and its religious institutions, thus opening the way for a world mission. When they leave Jerusalem after Stephen's martyrdom, some preach the Gospel in non-Jewish regions and towns: Samaria, the Ethiopian, the coastal plain (Lydda, Joppe, Caesarea, Ptolemais, perhaps Ashdod), Syria (at least Damascus and Antioch), possibly also in Rome. Soon the apostles join the mission notably Peter: in Jerusalem, Samaria, the coastal plain, Caesarea (Cornelius).

When Peter left Jerusalem in 41, S. believes that most if not all the twelve apostles probably left at the same time: from this time, there are no more apostles in Jerusalem, but "Elders". If that is so, then it is clear that the apostles did not understand themselves primarily as organisers and co-ordinators, but as missionaries. According to early Church tradition relations of Jesus were the responsible leaders of the Church in Jerusalem: James, and after his death in 62, Symeon bar-Kleopas.

Jewish Christian Missionaries from Jerusalem, probably soon also from Judea and Galilee, preached the Gospel at home and abroad: they founded communities in Syria and Cyprus, in Rome and Puteoli, perhaps in Herculaneum and Pompeii, in Asia Minor in Smyrna, Pergamon, Thyatira,

Sardis, Philadelphia, in the provinces of Cappadocia, Pontus and Bithynia, perhaps also in Macedonia and Achaia, and probably also in Egypt, in India and in Scythia. The information that we have, S. concedes, is sparse and often of doubtful historical value. But it is incontestable that, through the missionary activity of Jewish Christian missionaries in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, communities of "Jesus-confessors" were established in dozens of cities of the Roman Empire. S. regards the tradition of the mission of Thomas to India as "with great probability historical" (853-866). For another view, see L.P. van den Bosch, "India and the Apostolate of St Thomas", *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (ed. Jan N. Bremmer) (Leuven 2001) 125-148.

By far the longest part of the book is given to the mission of Paul, reflecting not only the apostle's historical importance but also, especially for an Evangelical Protestant, his theological predominance. S. admits that Paul's Gospel of salvation to the Gentiles through faith alone in Jesus Christ did not go unchallenged. On the other hand, he believes, analysis of the relevant texts in Paul himself and in Acts shows that the differences that, since F.C. Baur, many exegetes suppose between Paul and Peter and between Paul and James, have been exaggerated. Here I am with the author.

Paul pursued an international overall strategy: to preach the Gospel in provinces, countrysides, regions and towns in which no other missionary had preached before him. Whether he followed an overall geographical strategy remains for S. an open question. Elsewhere I have argued that such a strategy explains that part of Paul's "first missionary journey" that took him to Antioch-of-Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe: the first three towns were Roman colonies along the "Via Sebaste", which formed an important sector of the chain of communication in central Anatolia, and Derbe was a link connecting them with Cilicia (Tarsus) and Syria ("St Paul and the Roman Empire: Acts of the Apostles 13-14", *ANRW* II, 26.2 [1995] 1189-1231, at 1227-1228).

Discussing Paul's missionary methods, S. places emphasis on his work with a team of fellow-missionaries and on the adaptation of his sermons to his audience, while speaking always of the God of Israel and of Jesus as Saviour. I agree with him that the Areopagus speech is not a typical missionary sermon to Gentiles but corresponds to the situation at hand. S. points out that Paul used vocabulary and expressions that were provocative to Jews and potentially dangerous in Roman ears.

Paul developed, honed and defended his Gospel in dialogue with communities, especially in confrontation with Jewish-Christian opponents, who probably came from Jerusalem and disturbed Paul's theological persuasion and community praxis. This was the major issue in Galatia. Other communities posed different problems. Paul in his letters not only defended his Gospel, but also spelled out its consequences for the life of the community and the individual Christian. His missionary praxis consisted not only of missionary proclamation to Jews and non-Jews and the establishment of communities, but also in the accompanying of local communities to "dynamic maturity of faith, in which the fruit of the Holy Spirit comes to development" (1423). Paul did not hurry through the regions around the Mediterranean, but spent much time and energy in the spiritual and theological strengthening of the communities. This is shown in his self-understanding as a missionary, in

his sometimes-long stays in a city, in repeated visits to several communities, in his team of missionary fellow-workers, in the letters he wrote to communities.

The Pauline communities consisted of Jewish- and Gentile-Christians, who came from different religious persuasions and different ethical traditions. With converted Jews and proselytes, Paul could count on knowledge and practice of the will of God revealed in the Scriptures. With converted God-fearers and sympathisers, he could presuppose some knowledge of the Scriptures but not a thorough practice of the divine commandments. Converted polytheists did not always give up immediately and definitively their sexual laxity and their ties to superstitious attitudes and magical practices. Paul is concerned about the everyday behaviour of Christians, i.e. the realisation of the life of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, as instanced by his advice for behaviour in the family, in divine worship and in society. He does not call his newly founded communities to "World mission", but he acknowledges and praises the missionary engagement of individual communities.

The sixth part brings the story of the growth of Christianity down to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century. In the seventh and final part, Schnabel analyses the self-understanding of the early Christian missionaries (1477-1484), their praxis (1485-1498) and the message of the early Christian mission (1499-1505). Finally, he discusses the early Christian mission and the mission in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries (1506-1527). Here he criticises a number of attempts to ground modern missionary theory and/or practice on that of the early Church: some are naïve or ignorant of the circumstances in which the texts were written or are eisegesis rather than exegesis: "Not seldom such actualising analyses spring rather from the author's personal, social and cultural context than from an adequate investigation of the New Testament state of things" (1517). However, he also criticises certain modern theories of mission as untrue to the real demands of the scriptures: "The message of the early Christian mission is 'exclusive' when one thinks of the offer of the forgiveness of sins and of salvation at the Last Judgment alone through faith in Jesus Christ crucified and risen, 'inclusive' in view of the fact that human beings of all peoples, provinces, tribes, nations and languages are invited and called to believe in Jesus. The exclusiveness of the early Christian mission's offer of salvation was a stumbling block in the 1<sup>st</sup> century both for Jews and for Greeks, and is so today" (1523).

This is a book that merits the attention not only of students of the New Testament and of early Christianity, but also of those interested in the history and theory of evangelisation.

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## Varia

Tryggve N.D. METTINGER, *The Riddle of Resurrection*. «Dying and Rising Gods» in the Ancient Near East (ConB Old Testament Series 50). Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2001. 275 p. 16 × 23. SEK 238,-

Le volume de Mettinger sur les «Dying and Rising Gods» du Proche-Orient est indubitablement l'étude la plus solide sur le sujet qui ait été publiée à ce jour. On pourra éventuellement ne pas partager telle ou telle option interprétative, du reste toujours présentée par l'A. avec une prudence et une honnêteté exemplaires, mais on doit saluer le remarquable effort accompli pour nous proposer un dossier très complet et très stimulant. Tous les travaux de Mettinger se signalent du reste par leurs qualités de profondeur et d'exhaustivité: celui-ci n'échappe pas à la règle. Il est d'une richesse heuristique et bibliographique admirable: l'A., bibliste de formation, a étudié avec une même pénétration les dossiers relatifs aux religions mésopotamienne, égyptienne, syrienne, phénicienne, hittite et grecque. Sans travailler vraiment en historien des religions (son approche comparative reste quelque peu embryonnaire), il s'est néanmoins doté des outils théoriques nécessaires pour aborder la délicate question du rapport entre mythes et rites des «dying and rising gods». Enfin, le travail de Mettinger est remarquablement charpenté: la structure, qui pourrait sembler évidente — avec un chapitre introductif, quatre chapitres pour les principaux «dieux» concernés et, enfin, deux chapitres de «Comparative Perspectives», suivis par un épilogue — révèle toute son efficacité dans le détail de chaque chapitre où l'articulation est remarquablement élaborée de manière à faire cheminer tranquillement le lecteur au cœur d'une problématique plutôt complexe. Chaque étape du raisonnement fait l'objet d'un résumé ponctuel, chaque chapitre se clôture par des conclusions partielles. Il m'a rarement été donné de lire une étude aussi «propédeutique» dans le meilleur sens du terme et ce mérite rend la lecture aussi agréable que profitable.

Comme le signale l'A. dans sa Préface, tandis qu'il terminait son enquête, une publication collective sur le même sujet s'élaborait en Italie. Elle a aussi vu le jour en 2001: P. Xella (a cura di), *Quando un dio muore. Morti e assenze divine nelle antiche tradizioni mediterranee* (Verona). Nous aurons l'occasion plus avant de souligner les convergences et divergences entre ces deux ouvrages. L'on pourrait du reste considérer que le thème de la «résurrection», au sens large, est à la mode (quoique l'optique dans laquelle Mettinger l'aborde soit naturellement bien spécifique). Signalons les volumes suivants, que les lecteurs pourront consulter pour poursuivre une réflexion dont l'intérêt, pour les Biblistes notamment, est trop évident pour qu'on y insiste: W. Schweidler (éd.), *Wiedergeburt und kulturelles Erbe. Reincarnation und Cultural Heritage. Ergebnisse und Beiträge des Internationalen Symposiums der Hermann und Marianne Straniak-Stiftung* (West-östliche Denkwege 3; Sankt Augustin 2001; O. Mainville – D. Marguerat (éd.),

*Résurrection. L'après-mort dans le monde ancien et le Nouveau Testament* (Le monde de la Bible 15; Genève 2001); dans une certaine mesure aussi: A. Samellas, *Death in the Eastern Mediterranean (50-600 A.D.). The Christianization of the East: An Interpretation* (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 12; Tübingen 2002) et, enfin, J.N. Bremmer, *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife. The 1995 Read-Tuckwell Lectures at the University of Bristol* (New York - Londres 2002). Nous avons l'intention de revenir sur les apports majeurs de ce débat dans un *review article* (*Mort des dieux, mort des hommes, à propos de quelques publications récentes*) en cours de préparation pour la revue *Les Études Classiques*.

Revenons au propos de T. Mettinger. Il part du constat que la typologie frazérienne du «dying and rising god» a été sévèrement critiquée par les historiens des religions et les orientalistes ces dernières années (J.Z. Smith [1987] et M.S. Smith [1998]), une critique qui, du reste, avait déjà été très clairement explicitée par R. de Vaux dès les années '30. Il se dégage une sorte de consensus négatif que Mettinger entend remettre en question en étudiant le cas des «dying and rising gods» du Proche-Orient. Sa perspective est celle d'un dialogue (enraciné dans une profonde connaissance des étapes historiographiques du débat) autour d'une catégorie qu'il considère comme significative de l'univers religieux ancien. Son approche des divinités concernées n'entend nullement faire le tour de leur personnalité, complexes et multiformes, mais de clarifier la question de leur implication dans une mort/disparition et un retour/résurrection. Cela dit, l'enquête est à ce point précise et documentée que, souvent (par exemple pour Adonis), Mettinger nous propose d'excellentes mises au point qui ressemblent à s'y méprendre à des monographies synthétiques de qualité. Elles constituent en tout cas un très bon point de départ pour toute enquête à venir sur ces divinités.

Le premier chapitre «A Survey of Research and the Agenda for the Present Work» (15-53) constitue une riche présentation du *status quaestionis* depuis Frazer jusqu'à nos jours. Mettinger indique bien les principales étapes d'un parcours historiographique qui trouve sa source dans la IV<sup>e</sup> partie (IV/1) du *Golden Bough* de Frazer parue en 1914, sur la base d'une première version remontant à 1906 (l'année des *Religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* de Cumont: deux ouvrages extrêmement représentatifs d'une certaine vision tant du monde classique que de l'Orient). Frazer développe une approche typologique, pratiquement phénoménologique, d'une série de divinités (Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis et Attis pour l'essentiel) qui, aux yeux du chercheur d'aujourd'hui, ne peuvent plus guère être l'objet d'un amalgame. L'approche historiographique permet de mettre en avant une série d'enjeux du débat: tout d'abord, la distinction (Mettinger parle plus loin de *borderline*) entre le statut divin et le statut humain, une distinction qui semble résumée dans le binome immortalité/mortalité, mais qui n'est peut-être pas aussi tranchante qu'on a tendance à le croire; de manière corollaire, la question de l'évhémérisme, à savoir la possibilité pour des être humains, en particulier des rois, d'accéder *post mortem* à une forme de divinisation, avec des pouvoirs de «guérisseur» ou de «sauveur», une divination qu'évoquent à la fois le mythe et le culte; ensuite, l'éventail de situations concrètes que la catégorie frazérienne des «dying and rising gods» recouvre: disparition ou mort, retour, résurrection ou «vie» éternelle (y compris dans l'au-delà). Un constat de diversité qui a donné



naissance et alimente le débat sur l'utilité d'une telle catégorie. Enfin, la difficile question du sens de ces «histoires» de mort et de retour à la vie, en particulier leur rapport au «seasonal pattern», donc à la végétation qui meurt en hiver et renaît au printemps. Autant de défis, de «riddles» que l'A. affronte avec sagacité et compétence. Il ne s'agit pas de revenir à Frazer: «The present study does not intend to resuscitate Frazer's category», précise bien l'A. (41), mais de voir s'il a existé ou non au Proche-Orient ancien des dieux qui étaient censés mourir et revenir à la vie, s'il a existé ou non *un motif of a deity that dies and rises*. C'est précisément dans ce passage de niveau — de la réalité variable des croyances, des mythes et des cultes attestés dans des contextes historiques au *motif*, donc à la typologie, à la catégorie, à l'*Idealtypus* wébérien — que réside tout le problème. Prenant un peu de distance par rapport au livre de Mettinger, on est sans doute en droit de se demander dans quelle mesure ou sous quelle forme de telles catégories sont encore utiles à l'historien des religions et si la typologie n'a pas tendance à se dissoudre désormais dans la dimension historique, en cette époque post-moderne de relativisme absolu. Et pourtant, l'histoire des religions a bien besoin d'un armement conceptuel et de catégories susceptibles de canaliser l'approche comparative. À cet égard, on trouvera des considérations stimulantes dans le bel essai conclusif d'I. Chirassi («Why a god must die?»), dans le volume *Quando un dio muore*.

Après sa riche introduction (qui comprend aussi quelques considérations théoriques sur le mythe, le rite et la méthode comparative), Mettinger entame le dossier documentaire des candidats «dying and rising gods»: Baal d'Ugarit, Melqart, Adonis, Eshmun. Dans chaque cas, Mettinger rend compte des sources avec une extrême rigueur et précision, pesant chaque déduction et avançant peu à peu, prudemment, quelques conclusions partielles. Il ne m'est pas possible de rendre compte ici du détail de son exposition, à tous égards remarquable. Pour ma part, je partage la plupart de ses analyses, mais sur un point, il me semble que l'on peut prolonger ses conclusions. Mettinger souligne très bien la diversité intrinsèque des figures divines concernées par ces aventures de disparition/mort et de retour/résurrection: il n'est nullement possible de les superposer, en dépit du fait que certains, Melqart et Eshmun en particulier, présentent des affinités très fortes. En cela, la catégorie frazérienne est une simplification, une réduction (219), mais elle a néanmoins le mérite de souligner qu'un destin analogue touche plusieurs divinités et qu'il importe de s'interroger sur le sens de cette convergence. Pour l'expliquer, Mettinger recourt en somme au *seasonal pattern*: ces divinités incarneraient au fond toutes, chacune à sa manière, le cycle de la nature, l'évolution de la végétation, une étiologie (il utilise ce terme à propos du Baal d'Ugarit, p. 66) des conditions météorologiques, de l'alternance des saisons. On ne peut nier que ce niveau soit sensible dans la documentation disponible, de même qu'on ne peut douter du fait que ce type de réalité ait exercé une influence déterminante sur la vie quotidienne des populations, par le biais de l'alternance, existentiellement tangible, de la fertilité et de la sécheresse, de la richesse et de la désolation, du bien-être et de l'angoisse. Mais, avec d'autres (notamment P. Xella et S. Ribichini), j'ai la nette sensation que le message va au-delà de ce niveau, aussi primordial et essentiel soit-il. Le métabolisme de la nature est un code littéraire, symbolique qui vise une réalité plus vaste,

celle de la vie en société dans son ensemble. C'est le destin tout entier de l'humanité (y compris celui des dieux, à la fois créateurs et produits de cette humanité) qui se joue dans la lutte entre Baal et Mot. La disparition du dieu, quelle que soit sa physionomie précise (mort ou disparition), reflète sans doute originellement celle de la nature, comme son retour fait écho au retour du printemps (d'où l'insistance sur le fait que le dieu est «vivant», un titre qui pourrait bien constituer le nom originel d'Adonis, comme l'indique astucieusement Mettinger), mais avec l'urbanisation, avec le développement des sociétés dites supérieures au sein desquelles la royauté devient le point de médiation entre les dieux et les hommes, entre la nature et la culture, le sens des mythes et des rites de ces «dying and rising gods» s'est probablement enrichi, approfondi, diversifié. La référence à la nature devint une sorte de métalangage. Le sens d'un mythe est en effet rarement univoque, n'est jamais immuable et se comprend souvent au second degré. Ainsi, dans le mythe d'Héraclès, la victoire du héros sur une série d'animaux sauvages reflète sans doute, comme l'a bien montré Françoise Bader, la lointaine époque préhistorique où les Grecs ont fait l'expérience de l'appropriation de diverses espèces sauvages, mais, à l'époque archaïque et classique, ces récits ne renvoient plus tant à ce premier degré interprétatif qu'à un second degré analogique. Ainsi, dans le cadre de la colonisation grecque en Méditerranée, la victoire sur les animaux sauvages fonctionne comme une métaphore de la domination exercée sur les territoires conquis, sur les populations indigènes «apprivoisées» elles aussi, dans le sens où elles sont hellénisées. Pour revenir à Mettinger, il me semble donc que le *seasonal pattern* est une étape obligée de l'analyse, mais ne peut être la seule, ni surtout l'étape finale. Une meilleure prise en compte du contexte historique et de l'influence qu'il exerce sur les conceptions religieuses aurait peut-être permis à l'A. d'affiner son analyse.

Une autre critique que l'on pourrait formuler, c'est de n'avoir pas suffisamment souligné le rapport organique qui unit le «dying and rising god» à l'élément féminin. Il est question d'Astarté, d'Anat, d'Isis, etc. en rapport avec les dieux pris en considération, mais Mettinger ne valorise guère cette donnée constante: l'élément masculin «subit» en quelque sorte la transformation, l'élément féminin la provoque, la réalise (un trait que Bianchi avait du reste souligné dans sa typologie du «dio in vicenda»). C'est un élément qui mérite réflexion et qui trouve également dans l'idéologie de la royauté une intéressante confirmation, car c'est le souverain qui règne, mais c'est la déesse qui le choisit et lui confère son pouvoir. À cet égard, au sujet du fumet de cailles rôties qui provoque le retour à la vie de Melqart, il ne me semble pas que Mettinger ait rappelé (ce que j'avais indiqué dans ma monographie sur *Melqart*, 1988) qu'une tradition classique fait d'Asteria (un autre nom d'Astarté) une amante de Zeus transformée en caille. C'est un élément essentiel pour comprendre le sens du mythe: Melqart naît et renaît grâce à Astarté. Dans la même ligne, la caractérisation principale de Melqart me semble être celle de *Milk*, de «roi» (de sorte que les interrogations aux p. 84-85 sur le *pedigree* de Melqart, via Nergal, Reshep ou Baal perdent une bonne partie de leur sens). D'une manière générale, Mettinger attribue une importance assez secondaire au *background* de la divinisation des ancêtres royaux, bien attestée dans les traditions syriennes, qui constitue pourtant — c'est un point de vue que je partage avec P. Xella et S. Ribichini une fois

encore — une des clés de lecture principales de ces figures, sans pour autant prêcher pour un *revival* de l'évhémérisme. Cela dit, Mettinger fait une série d'observations critiques stimulantes à ce sujet, par exemple sur le caractère hypothétique de l'épiclèse *rapiu* appliquée à Baal.

Un dernier point: pour Mettinger, le nom de Baal (d'Ugarit) renvoie au *storm-god*, ce qui lui fait écrire ici et là que Melqart, Eshmun et Adonis, n'étant pas des dieux atmosphériques, n'appartiennent pas à la catégorie des «Baalim». Or, n'oublions pas que le Baal d'Ugarit avait un nom, Haddu et que «Baal Ugarit» n'était au fond qu'un titre qui fonctionne comme un théonyme dans les textes mythologiques notamment, tel un synonyme de Haddu. Melqart, Eshmun et Adonis ne sont en effet pas des *Wettergötter*, mais ils sont bien des *Baalim* — en langage religieux grec, on dirait des «dieux poliades» — et ce de manière explicite dans la documentation épigraphique: Baal de Tyr, de Sidon et de Byblos.

On pourrait ajouter à ces quelques remarques générales une série de points de détail (par exemple, sur le *de Dea Syria*, le récent point de vue de Jane L. Lightfoot, en faveur de l'attribution à Lucien [SEL 19, 2002, 137-148]), mais je préfère conclure par une considération de fond. Certaines contributions du volume intitulé «Quando un dio muore» méritent d'être lues en parallèle avec l'essai de Mettinger. Celui de Paola Pisi, par exemple, propose de Dumuzi-Tammuz une lecture sensiblement différente, qui affaiblit quelque peu l'interprétation de Mettinger, mais au fond, on a la sensation que les positions, qui se veulent pourtant en quelque sorte alternatives, sont plus proches les unes des autres qu'il n'y paraît. Les uns soulignent le «bicchiere mezzo vuoto», les autres le «bicchiere mezzo pieno». Là où les chemins s'écartent, c'est quant à l'évaluation de l'influence de ces dieux orientaux sur la conception christologique de la résurrection. Les positions sont assez paradoxales: Mettinger réhabilite en quelque sorte la catégorie des «dying and rising gods», avec toutes les nuances qu'elle nécessite, mais nie son influence sur le destin de Jésus — Jésus était un homme et non un dieu; il n'a aucun rapport avec le cycle naturel; Jésus meurt dans la souffrance: des arguments qui ne sont pas tous entièrement convaincants — qui resterait donc *unique*, tandis que Xella et son équipe tendent à nier l'utilité de cette typologie, mais estiment qu'elle a un rapport historique évident avec le motif christologique de la résurrection! On peut donc espérer que le dialogue continuera pour parvenir à des positions plus fiables sur ce point délicat, où l'on sent effectivement le poids des positions idéologiques, voire théologiques. Celles-ci n'ont cependant pas empêché Mettinger de réaliser une enquête historique et historiographique très louable et remarquablement fiable dont les acquis méritent d'être soulignés.

# NUNTII PERSONARUM ET RERUM

**R. P. Ignace de la Potterie, S. J.**

## *In memoriam*

In the early morning of 11 September 2003 Fr. Ignace van Pottelsberghe de la Potterie passed away at the age of 89 years. He was born in Waregem (Belgium) on 24 June 1914. In 1932 he completed his secondary studies ("Greco-Latin humaniora") at the Jesuit college of Gent and in the same year entered the Jesuit noviciate at Drongen (Gent). He did his philosophical and theological studies at the S.J. Faculty of Leuven and was ordained priest in 1945. From 1947 to 1950 he studied at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome and obtained the "licentia in Sacra Scriptura" in 1949. From 1950 until 1960 he taught New Testament at the S.J. Faculty of Theology in Leuven. In 1961 he returned to the Biblical Institute and remained there until the end of his academic activity, as a professor and member of the editorial board of *Biblica*.

In 1965 he defended his doctoral thesis: "*Alêtheia*". *La notion johannique de vérité et ses antécédents historiques*. This thesis was edited and enlarged and became his *opus magnum*, the two-volume publication: *La vérité dans Saint Jean. I: Le Christ et la vérité. L'Esprit et la vérité; II: Le croyant et la vérité* (Analecta Biblica, 73-74; Rome, 1977, 1128 pp.; 2d ed. in 1999). The Johannine writings constituted the major field of his biblical research. Yet he also devoted much attention to the biblical roots of the devotion to the Sacred Heart and to Mary. He was a passionate defender of the comprehensive role of hermeneutics in exegesis, as well as of an exegetical approach through tradition, more in particular the Fathers of the Church.

In addition to his work on truth in John, his more important books are *La preghiera di Gesù* (Rome, 1981; translated into three languages); *Studi di cristologia giovannea* (Turin, 1986); *La passion de Jésus selon l'évangile de Jean. Texte et Esprit* (Lire la Bible; Paris, 1986; translated into three languages); *Marie dans le mystère de l'Alliance* (Jésus et Jésus - Christ, 34; Paris, 1988; translated into five languages); *Il mistero del cuore trafitto. Fondamenti biblici della spiritualità del cuore di Gesù* (Bologna, 1988).

Fr. de la Potterie wrote numerous articles for journals such as *Biblica*, *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, and *Parola Spirito e Vita*. He participated in the meetings of the *Society of New Testament Studies*, *Colloquium*

*biblicum Lovaniense*, and many times at the Symposia of Ephesus on St. John the Apostle. Because of his initiative the Roman Society of New Testament exeges continues to meet three times a year.

Professor emeritus since 1984, he continued to teach until 1989. His academic career was formally concluded by a public conference “*Sacra Scrittura e scienza della fede*”. For a number of years he was a member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission and, later, a consulter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

In 2000 his failing health brought him back to Belgium (Heverlee-Leuven) where he remained, not without mental and physical suffering, until his death.

Fr. de la Potterie will be remembered by generations of students as one of the best professors at the Biblicum Institute both for meticulous preparation of his classes and lively, clear presentation. Moreover, he was the devoted but strict director of more than thirty doctoral dissertations.

Because of his biblical competence, strong convictions and honesty he was frequently consulted by persons in low and high positions. By temperament straightforward and combative he did not avoid polemic discussions. His long scholarly career was characterized by outspoken loyalty to the Church and profound apostolic endeavor.

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